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BENJAMIN DE FOREST CURTISS

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NEW YORK NAKED.

BY

GEORGE G. FOSTER,

AUTHOR OF

"NEW YORK BY GAS LIGHT," "FIFTEEN MINUTES AROUND NEW YORK," ETC. ETC.

———"Truth now hovers o'er my desk,
And what was once romantic, grows burlesque."

DON JUAN.

NEW YORK:
DE WITT & DAVENPORT, PUBLISHERS,
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NEW YORK NAKED.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

A SPECIMEN OF LITERARY AUTOBIOGRAPHY, AND A GLIMPSE OF JOURNALISM
IN NEW YORK.

I WRITE this book to do justice to myself, and perhaps upon several others. Within the last eleven years, my pen has been pretty constantly occupied in recording the results of my observations and investigations concerning life in its various aspects in the metropolis of the New World. Diverted by necessity in my earliest youth from following the natural bent and tendency of my character, which was an exclusive devotion to imaginative literature, and forced to take up, strengthen and develop the practical portion of my nature, the intuitive powers of observation belonging to the imagination have gradually been diverted, to be employed by the working machinery of my mental organization. This, rather than the original instinct of my mind, has imparted a certain speciality to my style and tone of thought and composition, which, altogether accidental as it is, I have found to be more available for the every-day purposes of acquiring a livelihood, by the exercise of my profession, than probably would have happened had I been left at liberty to pursue my own original inclinations. This, or something like it, so far as my observations have gone, is the common and almost universal chance of literary men and women. Not one in a hundred, either writer or artist, becomes distinguished and successful exactly in that particular line of mental creation, towards which the original constitution of his mind and genius tended, and to which his earliest aspirations were directed. Say what we will of the moulding and fusing power of original genius, we are obliged to confess that, after all, chance, accident, and circumstance, have more to do with the absolute destinies of every man and woman in existence, than any natural or inherent predilection or capacity.

Thus I, at the summit of full middle age, standing now at my thirty-ninth birth-day, on the highest peak of that everlasting mountain which divides the morning from the evening of life, one side of which lies in fresh and dewy shadow, sheltered from the arid noonday heats, and ever green and fresh in the exuberance of the glancing streams that flow adown its flowery sides—the other basking broad and faint and motionless beneath the fierce beams of the descending sun, its herbage withered, its foliage discolored by the prophetic instincts of a coming dissolution—I look in vain over the weary journey I have passed, to trace the silver thread of that path, winding amid the flowing wildernesses, which in youth I fondly set myself to tread. One by one, as that pathway led from the roof-tree of my father's home, do the vestiges that marked its outline disappear, until all are lost; and my way, trackless, and uncertain, merges in the undistinguishable vistas of the unknown forest. And so, not without having achieved a certain portion of that success which, in the abstract, I promised myself; and, with no reason to be dissatisfied with the general results to which my ambition and my labors have thus far brought me; I find myself, intellectually speaking, metamorphosed. I am not what I was, what I would be; but I am, in fact, another being, with another individuality, another horizon, another set of ideas, of hopes, of valuations, and am no more like the fantastic thing I promised myself in the exuberance of my early hope to be, than is the great world of the actual in which I now move, like that world as I pictured it, ere my adventurous feet had scaled the blue and airy boundaries that circle in the green amphitheatre of my native valley.

Well! I have not distressed myself too much about this. It is true, I have been conscious of this incessant change going on in my nature, and, for a time struggled heroically against it. Many and bitter were the rebuffs, the humiliations, and the disappointments, I encountered before I would consent to yield the bright and glowing visions of my youth, and gathering my girdle about me, set myself manfully to work at whatever my hand found to do. But now some years since, that great, that one, that all-important lesson of life has been learned. I no more strive to shape out an individual and symmetrical destiny for myself. I have learned to look upon myself as but one atom in the vast amount of mental energy, which is the atmosphere and the sustaining medium of magnetic attraction, holding all things together—the living electricity of the moral world. And so it has happened, that the dreamy poet of sixteen, whose humblest visions were millions of miles above the very loftiest things in this hum-drum, every-day world, has come to be the patient worker at the laboring oar of every-day journalism. The philosophic explorer of the lowest phenomena of life and human nature, in those classes and phases which in the old time had for him no existence; patiently gathering up the fragments, the refuse, of every-day life, he has sought, by the poetical instinct which is the motive power of his existence, to invest them with the brilliant colors of his own imagination, and to embalm them in the amber of his ideal affection. Thus embellished, these

worthless straws have attracted more or less the attention of passers-by; and without originally working for any specific object, except to gratify the irresistible necessity for work which existed in my nature, I have even made some contributions to the store of knowledge among practical minds, relating to the actual condition of the various classes of mankind, which has not been wholly without value. Especially as I now see my earliest labors in this department, reproduced in thin dilutions, and made the topic of much self-glorification by our "leading journals" of the day. For this I claim no merit. Like my own destiny, whatever value may attach to my labors, I candidly confess, must be regarded as entirely accidental. Yet gradually, as these labors expanded and developed themselves before me, I have classified and arranged them in some sort of form; so that for some time past, it has appeared to me to be a great and laudable life-purpose to go again carefully over the ground I have heretofore so hastily trodden, to gather and arrange the results of my observations into scientific order, and reproduce them in a permanent shape, with such additional facts, experiences, and suggestions, as my more matured judgment and moral perceptions should enable me to contribute. This work I have purposely delayed to the culmination of the middle period of life. Henceforth, whatever may be the improvements I may achieve in my power of correctly observing, and justly estimating the value and consequences of circumstances and events, I am fully conscious that my power of literary creation must begin to wane; and I believe, that with a few fortunate exceptions, it is the history of all literary creators, that the most precious portion of their powers and gifts have been expended as the common stone and mortar of the underground foundations upon which the future structure of their reputation was to be erected. This will not be so in the future; but up to the present moment, I am fully of opinion that the best and most valuable portions of the lives of eminent men in every department of human knowledge, have been poured out upon the barren quicksands of obscurity, or wasted in the unproductive and disheartening struggles of youth.

Divested, therefore, of every idea but a most practical resolution to leave behind me a not unworthy record of my humble passage through this world, I have contemplated, and am about to execute the present work. Nor do I fear the censure of the world for this preliminary egotism, in which I have lifted the curtain from my own heart, and laid bare the chances and changes which time has wrought upon my nature. Some such explanation for the total estrangement that I now endure from all that has seemed to make life tolerable, or for me desirable, was necessary to myself. The vanity of the poet, the enthusiast, the ideal dreamer, would not suffer that I should thus irrevocably pass into another and so much lower form of literary existence, without this one apology and protest in behalf of those lofty aspirations which overleaped the stars, and described a career among the constellations. And now I believe I am ready to go on with the real and practical purpose of this book.

It may be possible, that in the course of the ensuing pages, the reader will now and then detect forms of thought, or statements of facts, which he has encountered before from my pen. Considering the great amount I have written at various times, and in various shapes, but always fragmentarily, and to subserve the mere exigencies of the moment, upon life in New York, such reminiscences are, probably, unavoidable. However, I am confident that no positive repetitions will be found, as I have not referred, for many months, to a page or line that I have ever written before; and, for the purpose of the composition of this work, I have renewed from the beginning my personal acquaintance with the facts and circumstances of the various classes of life in New York, and have written exclusively from my more recent observations.

The first idea of the peculiar sort of sketches of city life by which, almost exclusively, the public have any knowledge whatever of me, was purely an accidental suggestion, arising from a bread-and-butter necessity. Having been for some months out of employment, and in great embarrassments, from illness and all sorts of mishaps, I some years ago undertook the task of local reporter, or gatherer of petty items of intelligence, about the courts and the city generally, for one of the morning journals—then young and of small circulation—at a rate of compensation considerably less than that received by the compositors who set up the type for the paper. It was my duty to make daily pilgrimages to that shrine of petty larceny, drunkenness, vagabondism, and vagrancy—the Tombs; to watch the proceedings in the petty sessions; to chronicle the arraignment of any remarkable John Smith for the unlawful appropriation of Chatham street boots, tainted sausages, and musty potatoes; to attend the preliminary examinations of suspected burglars, and record the Dogberrian decisions which conveyed starving, bloated, and drunken raggedness from the curse of democratic liberty to the comparative comfort and security of a ward in the Hospital, or a home on Blackwell's Island. Another portion of my duties was to lay in wait for the thunderous clangor of the great City Hall bell; to count its beatings, and, emulous of the red-flannel demons that dragged their rattling cars over the stony street, to rush off in the direction of every fire that startled the isle from its propriety. Often and often, when I had fondly deemed the labors of the day and night—aye, and morning too—to be over, and had subsided down those five flights of darkened stairs, and crawled wearily and painfully homeward, have my languid steps been arrested within sight of the bedroom beacon that rose upon my gaze, by the clangor of that dreadful bell; and, sending a last gleam of muscularity into the calves of my legs, have I started off over many a weary furlong, wading for hours in mud and water, gliding among blackened timbers and under crashing walls, hunting up dismayed presidents of trembling insurance offices, and arousing comfortable old foggism from its midnight slumbers, to ascertain the exact amount of salt pork and mackerel sacrificed on some particular occasion to the remorseless appetite of the “devouring element.” Another part of my duties was to

watch the gallant processions of our country's defenders—*videlicet*, the b-boys—preceded by Dodworth's "inimitable band," and followed by the shiniest and smilingest of Afric's stalwart sons, proudly bearing that inevitable target, and not only looking, but acting defiance to John Bull, and all the rest of creation, at every step. Fourth of July was to me a godsend; and the evacuation days, Croton anniversaries, and twenty-second of February, and even masonic funerals and odd-fellow processions, which embellished the week, were the prolific sources whence I gleaned my bread. Step by step, kept I pace with every ragged regiment of the now extinct fantastical brigade—my column advancing line by line with its column—and the grand parade of the "City Item" department and the fire department both astonished the public on the same occasion. How often have I marched proudly up Broadway, pencil and note-book in hand, watching the gallant New York infantry as it aired and gleamed its newly-polished boots along the pave; while the gallant Morris, the Mars and Apollo combined of this lucky Yankeedoodledom, with beaver gracefully suspended above his garlanded brow, bending low to the resistless ranks of beauty that darted the shaft "that all the shafts of war outflies," from thousands of half-closed, yet coquettishly opened, chamber-windows!

And then, too, the receptions of great men by our most hospitable city papas; the philandering of the honorable John Smith, ex-high constable of Frogtown, to the various public edifices and public institutions of our great and glorious island, from the tea-room to the Bloomingdale Asylum, and from the Penitentiary to the High Bridge and McCoomb's dam; the glorious cherry-pickings on Randall's Island, where the alderman from the Twentieth Ward makes his annual speech to the little raggednesses that there vegetate at the expense of the city; the Demosthenian debates and discussions within the sacred walls of the Board of Aldermen; the enlightening disputes as to whether Forty-eleventh street between Avenue A and Avenue B should be graded or lighted by gas; the appropriations to innumerable young physicians for all sorts of legs set and arms put in, in consequence of accidents by omnibuses that never existed and in cellars that never were dug; the great question whether "them benches" should be erected around the Park fountain, and whether the fountain itself should be surrounded by a wash-bowl or a paling; the question of lighting the Park with gas, which employed so many anxious days and nights between the public spirited publisher and myself; the extirpation of the awning posts from Broadway, and the banishment of the pigs from the streets; the discussion of the comparative merits of Russ and cobble-stone; the building of bridges to Brooklyn, and under-ground, over-ground, and second-story railroads from the Battery to Union Square; the removal of the Post Office to the publisher's back kitchen, and the suppression of the hog-pen adjoining the editor's country-seat at Turtle Bay; these were the prolific soils, abounding in composts and guano of the most precious description which produced those brilliant and evanescent flowers, whose aroma, drawn from the sources of

inspiration in my inmost soul, conferred a flavor and a quality upon the tasteless insipidity of a daily journal.

In these less serious occupations, my mind gradually acquired a bias in the direction where they were found; and the continual exercise of my faculties in this field of composition, developed that theory of the philosophy of moral and social life, and of the ultimate destiny of the human animal in its relations upon this earth, which lies latent in every imaginative soul, and is in fact the foundation of its religious, moral, social, and political existence. At last this new and improved phase of literary life led to the production of a series of sketches somewhat more pretentious and finished than the daily paragraphs with which I had been previously employed. These sketches, under the title of "New York in Slices," were originally written for publication in the journal for which I labored, whence they were copied into more than two hundred leading papers in the United States, either in whole or in part, and also in several of the more important journals of Europe. The idea, too, at once became popular, and was adopted and imitated in all directions. In a few weeks after the commencement of "New York in Slices," we had "Hudson in Patches," "Wisconsin in Chunks," and "Mississippi in Gobs"—and all sorts of states, cities and provinces, in all sorts of aliquot quantities. After the "Slices" were concluded, they were republished in the form of a two shilling pamphlet, and some thirty or forty thousand copies sold within a year, the regular sale of the book still continuing at the rate of about a thousand a month. Subsequently, as a kind of sequel to the "Slices," I contracted with the publishers of the present volume to write "New York by Gas-light," the sale of which has even exceeded the other, and appears in no likelihood of meeting a diminution. On the first appearance of this work, its truly painted pictures of New York life, and its startling developments of the vice and licentiousness of the higher classes of society, created a sensation new to our literature, and which met from some quarters the same species of opposition encountered at first by the *Mysteries of Paris*, and some other similar works. This, however, has long since died away; and many of the leading philanthropists of the day, if they would confess the truth, would own that their attention was first attracted to the horrible evils they are now engaged in meliorating, by the bold and naked truthfulness of "NEW YORK BY GAS-LIGHT."

The design, scope, and purpose, of the present work are of a much more comprehensive and complete character, than has formed the basis of any of my previous compositions; while I trust that its execution will at least not be inferior to the best of those. If it shall be found to lack somewhat of the exuberance and fervor that disappears from the human brain-flower as the edges of its leaves turn grey, and begin to close crisply upon the faltering stamen within, I trust this will be more than compensated by the additional importance, gravity, and philosophical accuracy of the statements, descriptions, and deductions in the following pages.

The last few years have witnessed a remarkable revolution in the tone of

public sentiment, respecting the best means of laboring for the improvement and advancement of the human race, and the gradual extinction of those evils which are now seen, and admitted by all hopeful souls to be inconsistent with the goodness of the Creator, and uncongenial to man's higher and better tendencies. Heretofore a thick pall has been spread over the crumbling skeletons and rotting ulcers of civilization, which, by the common consent of philosophers, moralists, and political economists, had never been raised to permit anything but the briefest glance at the horrors that lay beneath. But more recently, the juster and braver theory has obtained that truth and light are always good, and that in order to cure the terrible maladies that afflict humanity, first of all it is necessary that they should be clearly examined and deeply probed. So help me Heaven, as I am a living soul, and have an immortal destiny to expect, this has been the one only object of all the developments of misery, destitution, filth, and crime, in the dark labyrinths of this metropolis, that ever I have made.

Following close upon the somewhat thorough, but still fragmentary and imperfect revelations contained in the "New York in Slices," and "New York by Gas-light," came as an express rebuke to the ungrateful baseness that had sought to stigmatize me for their production, the far broader, deeper and more repulsive disclosures of the Gehenna life of London, from the untiring, fearless, unshrinking pen of MAYHEW, whose reports, stamped with the authority and force of official documents, originally uttered through the London Chronicle, have startled Europe and amazed mankind. These reports, too, in their sometimes prurient and disgusting details, full of catalogues of horrors from which my more timid pen would have recoiled, have been spread, illuminated with praises, in the columns of the very journals which sought to damn me, and which are now following in my wake, with feeble imitations of what it cost me so much to produce. I do not think it too much to claim that the great movement of illuminating the depths of the moral and social degradation of life in a metropolis, owes something of its momentum to me; and it is in the hope of accomplishing something more for philosophy, philanthropy, and the great cause of humanity, now crying aloud to be heard, that I have with difficulty torn myself from the overwhelming pressure of daily avocations, clamorous for my exclusive strength and devotion, and carefully, laboriously, and conscientiously, given this—probably the last work of mine upon subjects of this nature—to the press. If its execution shall at all correspond with the important duty which has produced it, I know it cannot be totally destitute either of interest or permanent value.

CHAPTER I.

DISCOVERY OF NEW YORK BAY—PURITANS SAILED FOR NEW YORK, BUT LANDED AT PLYMOUTH.

IN the month of September, 1609, toward the commencement of that dreamy, delicious season, unknown but to these regions, and poetically characterized by us as the Indian Summer, a small and adventurous yacht, named the "Half-moon," and commanded by Sir Hendrick Hudson, first glided over the waters of New York Bay—that bay which now incloses more wealth, power, and commercial enterprise than any other on the globe, and whose beauties are celebrated by bard and romancer, as equal to those of the renowned Bay of Naples. It was the first time that any vessel propelled by the guidance of human will, other than the canoes of the red man, had ever profaned these lovely waters. All around was silence and solitude, broken only by the glancing of the merry waters in the yellow sunlight, or the deep-breathing of the interminable forest, that stretched away from the green and sleeping point of the island for a thousand miles, to the great undiscovered lakes and rivers of the north. The simple-minded red men at length came down towards the water's edge, in timid consternation at the approach of the strange and wondrous vessel, with its graceful prow turning aside the waters, and its white wings extended to catch the breeze. They saw in it a great canoe of the Manitou, and with songs and dances, and such rude rites as their untutored natures had caught from the unbroken traditions of their tribe, they began to prepare a feast for the reception of the Great Spirit. "By-and-by," as sayeth the historian Heckwelder, "the chief, in red clothes and a glitter of metal, came on shore in a little canoe. Mutual salutations and signs of friendship were exchanged, and, after a while, strong drink was offered, which made all gay and happy." A short time was necessary to make the acquaintance and acquire the confidence of the simple Indian men, and when the white-skins offered to treat with them for as much land as a bullock's-hide could cover or encompass, the request was granted; whereupon, the cunning white

men, with that deplorable spirit of fraud which has extirpated a simple but noble race, cursing us as they sink into earth, and calling upon Heaven to revenge them upon our heads, cut the bull's-hide into a long and narrow thong, with which they encompassed many acres. The simple Indians took it all in good part, ratified this earliest land speculation of the cunning Yankees, and welcomed them with a cordial hospitality. Such was the origin of New York, on the spot called Manhattan, or Manahachtanieuks, which means, in common prose, "the place where they all got drunk;" and when we go about the new wilderness of brick and mortar, topmasts and smokepipes, with their branches of shrouds and running rigging—when we descend into the six thousand grog-shops and rum-cellars with which the island of New York at this high point of civilization abounds—and especially when we walk through the neighborhood of the Crystal Palace, and see whole streets and squares of groggeries, containing poisonous liquors enough to fill another reservoir as large as that of the Croton, grandly frowning above them—we are still inclined to go back to good old-fashioned Indian nomenclature, and exclaim, "Yes, indeed, this is the spot where they all got drunk!"

The tribe of Indians then inhabiting this region, were the remnants of the once warlike Delawares, or Lenapes, the chief of the Five Tribes, whose noble characteristics are so admirably described in that best of all Cooper's land romances, "The Last of the Mohicans." "When you first arrived on our shores," said the good Lenapes afterward, in remonstrating with Governor Keift upon their frauds and impositions, "you were sometimes in want of food. Then we gave you our beans and corn, and let you eat our oysters and fish; we treated you as if we were one of ourselves, and gave you our daughters for wives." It seems that the Yankees began to be ungrateful even before they became a Republic!

After exploring the North River, upon which expedition he was absent twenty-two days, Hudson returned to Manhattan, and set sail on his return to Europe. His favorable account of the situation and nature of the country induced an expedition, in 1614, five years afterward, consisting of two ships under Capts. Adrian Blok and Hendrick Christiaanse. It was now that the first actual settlement of New York was begun upon the site of the present city, consisting during the first year of four small houses, and in the course of the next twelve months, of a redoubt on the site of the old Macomb houses, in Broadway, now occupied by the new and costly public stores. This little dorp, or village, was grandiloquently enough named New Amsterdam, and its principal object and purpose was

as a post for the prosecution of the fur-trade, another corresponding settlement being simultaneously founded at Albany. Holland was then in the palmy days of her commercial and mercantile prosperity, building every year a thousand ships, and having twenty thousand vessels, and a hundred thousand mariners. The city of Amsterdam was at the head of the fur-trading enterprise, and it was her merchants who had sent out Capt. Henry Hudson to seek a northern passage to the East Indies. Failing in this, he, in search of something to compensate for his disappointment, sailed southward toward Virginia, and in so doing stumbled upon the memorable discovery of the Delaware and Hudson rivers.

The genius of the Low Dutch was never, even in its highest state of development, competent to originate and carry out a systematic career of colonization, nor was it with any such purpose that the incipient settlement at New Amsterdam was commenced; but there were in Holland, at that time, large numbers of enterprising, educated, and intelligent Englishmen, who had sought shelter there from the fierce religious persecutions of their native land, and they it was who entertained the earliest idea of founding a colony at New York. They actually embarked for that purpose in 1620; but were prevented by the stupidity, or rascality, of their Dutch captain from reaching their destined point of debarkation in the pleasant island where we all got drunk, and being landed, or rather run ashore, at the bleak and barren rock of Plymouth. But destiny, so often playing us insignificant and atomic individuals the slipperiest of tricks, is always faithful to her trust when she takes in hand the fate of races and of kingdoms; and thus it is, that the Puritans of the old Anglo-Saxon race, banished from their native Britain, and departing from Holland to found a new empire in the just-discovered Western Hemisphere, in a few years penetrated from the barren and rocky wilds of New England to their original destination in New York, and here assisted in essentially building up the capital and the metropolis of the future world—thus completing the destiny which the stolid error of the old Dutch dunderhead could divert or impede but for an instant in the lapse of time. For a few generations the many-breeched Knickerbockers, Van Twillers, and Stuyvesants, remained at the head of the slowly-planted and cabbage-growing New Amsterdam. But, at length, the feet of the Puritan touched the soil, and, as if by magic, the scene was changed. The red man disappeared, fading like a cloud melting into the invisible distance, hard followed by the broad-backed and substantial burghers, who fast pursued them to annihilation. Little remains of either but a few unpronounceable names, and the gable ends of three

or four miserable groceries, waiting for the next fire—or, what is about the same thing in these tear-down days, the expiration of their leases—to be overwhelmed beneath the trampling of No. 14, and the dirt-cart of modern improvement, and to give place to another palace erected to the deity of Trade and Commerce.

CHAPTER II.

NAME AND ORIGINAL APPEARANCE OF NEW YORK—THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE.

WE should not be doing full justice to our subject, if, while giving an account of the name and etymology of the island and city, we should omit that most valuable and veracious of all historians, Deidrich Knickerbocker, in our list of "authorities" thereupon. This renowned historian gives the matter, as is usual with him when detailing great and important facts, a pleasant and facetious turn; but, nevertheless, there is a great deal of truth at the bottom of most of his jokes; and it is therefore very probable, his account is, after all, the only true one. According to Deidrich, the name of the island most current at the present day—Manhattan—and which is also countenanced by the great historian Vanderdonk, originated in the custom among the squaws of the early settlement of wearing men's hats, as still may be seen to be the custom among those of the tribe that occasionally appear in Broadway. "Hence," quoth Deidrich, "as we are told by the old governor, who is somewhat of a wag, hence rose the appellation of Man-hat-on, first given to the Indians, afterward to the island. A stupid joke," adds Deidrich, "but well enough for a governor." In the history of Mr. Richard Blome, written in 1687, the island is called Manhadaës; while John Josselyn (not the famous clown) expressly calls it Manadaes. Other authorities give different etymologies of this beautiful name, among which is Manetho, derived from the Great Spirit of the Indians, who was supposed to make this island his favorite abode, on account, according to Knickerbocker, of its uncommon delights;—for the Indian traditions affirm that the bay was once a translucent lake, filled with silvery and golden fish, in the midst of which lay this beautiful island, covered with every variety of fruits and flowers; but that the sudden eruption of the Hudson River laid waste these blissful scenes, and Manetho took his flight beyond the great waters of the Ontario.

The original face of New York Island, there is every reason for

supposing, was a succession of green hills, gently undulating up and away from the shore, and lost in the superincumbent wilderness. At the extreme south end of Broadway, where the ancient fort formerly stood, was an elevated mound of about the same height as the present level of Trinity Church, which, from that point, swept regularly and gradually down to the shore on the North river. In the neighborhood of Pearl and Beekman streets, two rather precipitous hills, known as Beekman's and Peck's hills, rose and extended down to the Middle Dutch Church, in Nassau street, and to Maiden Lane. Between these acclivities, in several places, flowed streams of water, while an inlet from the bay, called the canal, set up for a considerable distance what is now known as Broad street. Up Maiden Lane flowed another inlet, through Smith's marsh, or fallow. A little beyond Peck Slip existed a low water-course, which, in high tide, ran up to the Collect (Kolck), and thence, joining with Lispenard's Swamp, on the North River side, produced a union of waters quite across the entire city: thus, according to Watson's Annals, converting it sometimes into an island, the eastern shore of which was at the present low line of Pearl street, as it crosses Chatham. At this point it was occasionally necessary to use boats to cross the foot-passengers passing from either side of the rising ground ranging on both sides of Pearl street, as that street inclines across the city till it runs out upon Broadway.

It is not our intention to follow out in detail and step by step the gradual but miraculous growth of this vast metropolis, from the little struggling dorp of Low Dutch houses, scattered around the fort at the southern extremity of the island, to its present gigantic dimensions and power as the third city in the civilized world. Taking the two extreme points of the landing of Hendrick Hudson and the census of 1850, the imagination, by a single glance, takes in by intuition the characteristic idea of the intervening space of two hundred and forty years that have elapsed, and of all the wondrous changes which these years have brought. To me the pursuits and labors of the antiquarian and the historian have ever been uncongenial; and the historical studies which I have been compelled at various times to pursue in the exercise of my literary labors, were always irksome, and among the least welcome of my tasks. This is, perhaps, a strange confession for a man to make who aspires to be a writer, and even an instructor of his kind; yet as I cannot so far forget myself as to say that of myself which is not strictly true, so I feel bound to make the confession. To me it has ever appeared that when the present has done its work, and glided to the "dim dominions of the

past," it has no longer any vital interest, and that the lessons and morals which mankind has for so many thousand years been in the habit of drawing from its incidents, had better be left unknown. The human race can make no certain progress in the right direction, so long as its eyes are constantly fixed upon the past, and all its ideas, principles, processes, and methods, are drawn alone from what has been. True, the melancholy histories of ignorance, superstition, oppression, and crime, which form the staple materials of the world's history in all times, and in all countries, furnish abundant beacons to warn us from what has gone before ; but their friendly light has never yet been regarded by man or nation. Men have studied the past, but to learn how individual success in obtaining power over the minds of their fellow-men was best to be achieved. It is not too much to say, that society has drawn no beneficent lesson from the past, and that it is alone to the hope in the future, and a perfect sense of what the destiny of man should be, that we may look for the true science of human progress.

One of the most striking illustrations of these views is the actual existence of this very metropolis. Scan it closely and with a careful eye—analyze the elements of its apparent prosperity, and the real misery of the thousands whose unprofitable, joyless lives go to swell the imposing records of our boasted census—examine into the condition of its society—measure the barriers, insurmountable as walls of iron, which separate the different castes of which it is composed—the millionaire from the man of genius, struggling with poverty and neglect—the lordly merchant and the starving author—the wealthy and insolent few who insult the public by an exhibition of the trappings of a nobility and rank for which they have not even the excuse of ancestral name and blood—go, as I have done, through the lanes and alleys, the underground dens of poverty ; visit the haunts of crime, and filth, and licentiousness, the vast caravanseries without air or the light of heaven, crowded with hundreds of gasping paupers—inquire into the histories of our thousand inventors and men of brains and genius—investigate, in a word, the whole movement of the machinery of life, which carries along this great metropolis, this magnificent city, the pride and glory of the New World, the boast of mankind, the crown of civilization ; and in what respect is it better than the cities of the Old World, where oppressions sanctified by ages and sanctioned by law and military power, have so long held undisputed and absolute sway ? Swell as it may with pride the heart of the philanthropist, in commencing this investigation into our *actual* condition, long before he has finished his work, it will throb with pain and

sympathy over the woes, and sorrows, and sufferings, he cannot alleviate; over the injustice and oppression he cannot remedy; over the whole rottenness and corruption of the social fabric, which but now appeared to him so noble and so beautiful.

Is it, then, true, that the destiny of humanity is not progressive, but that, running ever round in a wide circle, the vast arc deceives our narrow vision, and we think we advance onward, while every step brings us nearer to the point whence we set out? Read the past, consult history, shut up your hope, and give play but to memory and the power of reminiscence, and the answer must be, it is even so! Only when we have closed our perceptions to the outward form and order of material events, when we have opened up the interiors of the soul, and asked of her as a part of God Himself, our ultimate destiny, does the true glory of humanity begin to break around us. We do not believe that there is a city in Europe, where, in proportion to its population, a greater amount of degradation, suffering, licentiousness and crime, exists, than in this very, this proud and magnificent New York. Beneath the tall spires of its countless churches, and within the shadow of its commercial palaces and princely mansions, where life flows so brightly and so gaily, catching and reflecting every sunbeam as it dances across each cresting wave, rolls the deep, dark, sullen ocean of poverty, crime and despair. And he who would justly perform his duty to the times and to his race, must not hesitate to launch out fearlessly upon this gloomy sea, but explore its profoundest recesses, and bring to the light of day the horrid monsters that live and gender in its oozy depths. This work be mine. Already have I shed some light but dimly, and by transient gleams, over the vast and momentous problem of life in New York. Now the time has come when my labor is to be reviewed, and its deficiencies supplied, and when the whole work, so far as its execution lies within my power, must be well and faithfully done. Yes, without fear or favor, I must speak the truth of the various classes of man, aye, and of womankind, who go to make up the population of this mighty city. What motives govern them, what ends they purpose, and what means they use—these are the themes which must employ my pen. And as a true and faithful student of natural history—for is not the study of mankind and his phenomena ten thousand times better deserving the name of natural history, than the atomic results of lives spent in watching the domestic habits of grubs and beetles, or analyzing and baptizing the strata of inaccessible rocks? Humanity is the creature, the creator, the consummation of the universe. God himself is but the perfect Man; and although in his long and weary

course from the germinative peace and purity, the innocence and infantile experience of Eden, he has departed far and wide from the knowledge of his divine character and destiny, yet, when this term of probation has expired, when the forty days of agony and despair in the wilderness have gone by, and passed with shriekings and wailings into the tomb of time, then from its Mount Pisgah shall humanity behold the promised land, the restoration of its Eden, its purity and its divine union with God himself. Therefore, shall I, animated by a knowledge consoling and glorious as this, shall I be swayed by fear of the petty spite or malice of disappointed men or embittered classes, in the discharge of this my knightly devoir in the great tournament of life? No! that which is within me, that which compensates me for the unprofitable dreams and unfruitful struggles of life, shall be faithfully and honestly recorded in these pages; so that when this body has passed away, and the spiritual man that animates it has resumed its existence in those spheres where life is immortal, and progress infinite, it may smile with a satisfaction that all the rewards and honors of the world could never bestow to see my children, and their children's children, in the new and higher dispensation that is rapidly coming upon the earth—not ashamed of the thoughts and aspirations of their humble ancestor. So let us to our work in earnest. Let us touch with the disenchanting spear of truth the various classes of life and society in New York. Let us compel from them their utmost secret, the theory upon which they act, the thought and hope upon which they live. Let us strip off the mask in which each plays its mummery before the rest, and let us show in their true proportions, and each with its name indelibly branded upon its forehead, the demons that guide and direct the game of daily life in our metropolis.

CHAPTER III.

THE MERCANTILE BARONS OF NEW YORK—THE CALIFORNIA SWINDLE—
THE PRESS, AND THE PART IT PLAYED IN THE GAME—A GLIMPSE
AT LIFE ON THE PACIFIC.

It would be as impossible as unprofitable to enter into a minute detail of the transactions and processes of mercantile and commercial life in all their ramifications. It would be as practicable to follow a blackleg through all the devious windings of his career and picture each sin of fraud and robbery and outrage, in which he has been engaged. As the tyrant and despot who erects his throne and establishes his bloody power upon the corpses of millions of subjects, or enemies slain in battle or in the light of day, towers in sublimity above the assassin who sneaks about the midnight streets, and lays in wait for a solitary victim, so the prosperous merchant-prince of the nineteenth century looms proudly above the petty gambler and swindler. And as the assassin who kills but a single man would, if caught, swing upon the gallows, while the monster who immolates his millions is satiated with the applause of the glorifying world, so our merchant-prince treads loftily the career of honor and respect and emulation, while the thief and the blackleg live in daily and nightly fear of the iron fingers of the law.

Notwithstanding the impossibility of chronicling in detail the movements of the commercial world, within the limits of a single volume, yet it is indispensable to our purpose that we should communicate some general idea of the intrinsic character of these operations which control the world and form the basis of modern commerce; that we should show by a few strong artistic touches the fundamental principle that stimulates the movements of the world of trade and the laws which govern it. For this purpose, the recent discovery of the gold mines of California, and the unparalleled excitement which has in consequence swept over the face of the entire civilized world, will faithfully and efficiently serve our purpose. Fortunately the details of this history are

fresh in the minds and memories of all. So sensitive and retentive is the money-making faculty, that events which bear upon it are keenly remembered and not likely to be forgotten. It is fresh in the recollection of us all, the delighted and half incredulous, yet willingly received, enthusiasm with which the first reports of the gold discoveries in California were received. So miserably insufficient and unsatisfactory is the life, and the reward of life, of every man in this inverted age of human energy and activity, that the slightest rumor of a change for the better or the opening of a fresher and more attractive field, instantaneously excites the acquisitive faculties of the entire community to a state of partial insanity. The parties who had been preparing to take advantage of the California discovery for their enrichment well knew and had deeply studied this all-controlling trait in the dispositions of mankind, and their plans were skillfully laid, and adroitly executed, for increasing the delirious excitement produced by these golden-winged rumors, and urging to madness the cupidity of that restless, ever shifting, ever discontented mass who form so large and important a portion of our population. It is much to say, yet it is not too much, that the whole scheme of California emigration, the results of which, whether for good or evil, have not yet begun to rise upon the perceptions of the world, was the cold-blooded and deliberate execution of a plan for working upon the weaknesses of humanity, even to the destitution, the desolation, and the destruction of its victims, for the mere and absolute purpose of filling the already distended coffers of a few reckless and gigantic gamblers, and these gamblers, too, the men who aim at and achieve the highest positions in the respect and reverence of the community—men whose persons inspire awe among their fellow-citizens, whose slightest nod of recognition is treasured by the humble disciple as an heirloom and the foundation of the future pride of his family; whose movements control the destinies of the great and miserable world of Helotism, the ill-paid, the uneducated, the half destitute and half brutalized domain of labor and production. These are the men who assign the position of every man and every institution in the community, whose power is more arbitrary and more unscrupulously used than that of the most violent of those feudal tyrants that once led their vassals and retainers to the field of battle.

The means by which the designs of these individuals were carried out were various, but all disreputable. The principal engine, however, of all the mischief, and I blush for my profession and for my race when I write it, has been the press—that sole representative on earth of the chivalry

of humanity, that sole unpaid defender of the oppressed, righter of the wronged, and terror of the mighty evil-doer—that knight-errant of the nineteenth century, whose pen, more mighty than the lance or battle-axe of armed knight, can pierce through the stoutest mail of evil, and hurl to the dust the monstrous giants that ever stride and trample upon mankind. And yet, how basely, how utterly, and for how contemptible a price, has this noble champion of the world been seduced from its high and holy mission! How insignificant the Delilah who, with her golden shears, has made fall the locks of strength of this Samson of the Israelites of our day! I know, and could trace man by man, and act by act, the whole of this infamous conspiracy against the peace, and health, and hope, and life of this community. I could show how, that certain respectable and honored merchants should receive large sums for passage-money from the enormous emigration to California; these gold rumors were inflated, and repeated, and reiterated, in the ears of the credulous public, and printed and paid for column by column, and endorsed with all the editorial authority of our leading journals. Taking the cue from those weighty and controlling organs of news and public opinion, the smaller journals, both in our own city and throughout the whole country, have reëchoed the cry, and helped to swell these fascinating and irresistible reports which sent crowds upon crowds to our ports of embarkation, and decimated the community of its best, most youthful, and most precious material, to pour it out upon the crags, and deserts, and cañons of California—leaving behind, oh, what desolated hearthstones, that shall never glow again with the cheerful light of domestic peace! and what tender and loving hearts, to break over the disappointed hopes that had reconciled them to the separation from those they held dearer than life, but who, alas! they shall see no more for ever! Some have laid their weary frames upon the sands of the western deserts, where the bald eagle and the prairie wolf have screamed and howled, circling and drawing nearer and nearer to them as the flame of life burned low, and at last went out. Some, reaching the goal of their fond hopes, have found their golden anticipations bitterly blasted; and, in despair, and the reaction of their insane excitement, have either sunk to death beneath the remorseless hand of disease that reigns in these inhospitable climes, or become the victims of debauchery and crime. Thousands now linger drooping and sad upon those barren mountains, who would exchange their right arms for the means to return to their homes; who would willingly lay down their lives the moment after they had been permitted once more to clasp wife and children to their hearts,

and cover them with their dying blessing. Language, powerful and cunning as it is, has but faint power to paint the horrors of that grave of hopeful men; and if we reflect that all this terrible excitement and this terrific result has been deliberately invoked for the mere purpose of enriching a few men who already were rich enough to answer every extravagant wish of themselves and theirs, the idea becomes too oppressive and too incredible to be entertained. Yet, such is the melancholy, the miserable fact; and this little history contains the epitome of the whole life of commerce. From it may be drawn the great lesson which it teaches, and the lesson that awaits it. For, let us not insult God by believing that an institution like this, which Moloch-like immolates its victims by thousands, can be a permanent and necessary condition of humanity. No! The time is coming when all that which we now know as commerce and trade, and all the respectable, and venerable, and worshipful institutions and conventionalities which it has established and by which it reigns, shall have disappeared from among mankind; when the honest labors, and the spontaneous efforts of all shall bring their products to the general storehouse, whence in turn all shall freely and without price, draw the necessities, the luxuries, and the embellishments of life. Were it not for this hope, for this certainty, that shapes itself in light in the heart of every hopeful dreamer, mankind, and destiny, and God, would be an enigma too horrible to be contemplated by a sane and thoughtful soul.

[NOTE.—This chapter was written two years and a half ago, when the mad rush to California, excited by the means I have described, was at its height, and the accounts almost daily received from the plains, the Isthmus, and from San Francisco, and the diggings themselves, were actually appalling. It could not but be that thirty months of the intense activity of the present age, and the operation of that recuperative energy which so strongly characterizes our race, should have wrought great changes for the better in the condition of life on the Pacific. But, as the facts I have stated, were all lamentably true, *then*, and as the deductions I have drawn, are true, *always*, I let the chapter stand as it was—like those crosses which are left to mark the places where murders have been committed on the high road, long after the banditti hordes have fled before the approach of civilization.]

CHAPTER IV.

NOBLE EXCEPTIONS TO THE CORRUPTIONS OF COMMERCE—A TRUE THEORY OF TRADE.

I OUGHT, perhaps, to state that exceptions, and noble ones, exist in every evil that afflicts the world. Were it not so, we should have no tangible sign of the reality of our hope in a progressive and beautiful destiny for the ultimate condition of mankind. Many magnanimous and excellent, pure, good, and trustworthy natures may be found in the great world of commerce—many large and noble hearts, whose deeds of silent beneficence transcend the charity of angels, by so much as their position is less favorable to goodness than theirs. “None are all evil,” saith the poet; and it is at last to poetry and its visions that we must resort for all true prophecy and prophetic inspiration. There are many high and lofty merchants in New York, who not only honor their Maker and themselves, but rescue their profession from some portion of the odium which otherwise would weigh it down, and annihilate it, by the enormity of its own baseness. These, whoever they are, and wherever they may be, will understand and admit much of the truth that I have written upon their craft; nor do they require to be pointed out in person. Such notoriety would be as unwelcome as uncongenial to the generous law of their existence.

Nor am I at all blind to the momentary importance and greatness of commerce as an agent and engine in the progressive development of society; and while I cannot accord to commerce a greater degree of virtue than to those other forms of oppression which are rapidly becoming extinct on earth, yet I clearly see that it is a phase in advance of them—and that, though mankind, under its infliction, may not suffer less, yet the glorious consolation remains, that they have not still so long to suffer. From savagism to feudalism was a step forward. From feudalism to the present forms of a commercial hierarchy is another, and a long and most important, step. When, and in what direction, will the next be taken, we may only guess; but, for any rational and true answer,

I should not apply to the various reformers of the day, who go about in shabby coats and dirty boots, preaching reform, until they have turned an honest penny out of the gaping gullibility of the crowd, and then set up respectability and old fogysm with the best of them. At present, we can only investigate and look upon these rascalities of all sorts, and especially of mousing and cheating tradesmen, as a great moral ulcer, as cities have before me wisely been called—an ulcer, too, which must disappear and be transmuted into clean white flesh, before the moral leprosy that enscales the great body of society will ever disappear.

Nor are the absolute robberies and extortions of trade its worst evils. The moral effect of its practice, and its teachings, the crushing blight it shoots from infancy over the expanding enthusiastic soul of youth, the cold, absorbing lessons it instills, drop by drop, into the heart of noble sympathizing nature, in its child-like phases, the practical teachings of shrewdness, and knowledge of the world, which cautious fathers and calculating mothers are so prompt to impart to their offspring, are a monstrosity, great enough to convert the whole human race into devils; and when I think seriously of all these things, instead of wondering that mankind are so bad, I wonder that any of them are better, and that all are not worse.

The business of conducting the necessary barter among members of the same country and between the different nations of the earth, the whole machinery of trade and commerce, will, in another and a better state of society, be of the simplest construction and most unexpensive operation.

The ramifications of trade are, of course, as diversified and complicated as the wants and necessities of society. I have but indicated two or three of the most notorious and conspicuous among them. Were I to prolong this catalogue until I had exhausted the material for instructive and profitable comment, and disclosure of the dishonesty of the operations of trade, my book would be full ere I had fairly laid out the subject. But perhaps, in justice to my own profession, and to literary men in general, I ought not to dismiss it without one blow wielded for the honest recompense of genius, talent, scholarship, and mental toil. As it is, the man of genius, let him be the most cautious-tempered, moderate, and discreet of his class, must waste the greater, and better, and fairer, and brighter portion of his life in unrecompensed drudgery, that he may erect for himself a platform upon which to stand, and from which to clutch a tardy reward for his priceless labors. We cannot, conscientiously, let escape the whole class of book-publishers and brain-buyers, from the severest of our

censures upon the more material products and operations in the world of trade. Oh! if I dared but take the cover off a hundred or two of brains I know of, and dip out with the point of my pen the secret history of their owners, the breadless days and sleepless nights, the feverish and crazing years of struggle, and suspense, and mental torture, the temptations to crime and suicide, the greatly growing misanthropy, which at last enveloped the whole horizon in a dense and gloomy cloud, drove the remembrance of the rosy dreams of youth out of existence, and paralyzed the very spirit within them, what a sad, what a humiliating record would it be! The old world of letters in Europe, where Goldsmith begged and Johnson starved, and Pope turned sycophant, and Savage died in the gutter, was in all conscience bad enough, one would think, to draw down upon the world the fiercest judgments of an offended God, who saw his spirit, in shape of human genius, freely imparted to his favored children, thus spurned upon and trampled in the dust by coarse and griping avarice and the tyranny of trade. But if this were outrageous in the old monarchies of letters, what shall we say of the state of things in our republic of letters, where, in addition to the conventional, proverbial, and professional wrongs heaped upon authors by the publishers, they are subjected to the crushing competition of the stolen literature of all the world beside, thundered down in one incessant reign of folios, quartos, and duodecimos upon their devoted heads? If the publishers of Grub street were mean, and selfish, and cruel, and tyrannical, they at least paid, in some sort of fashion, for what they published; but the autocrats of *our* Grub street not only refuse to buy the products of American genius, on the plea that they can have all the intellect of Europe for nothing, but they impudently parade upon their catalogues the damning fact that they can afford to publish the works of all the great intellects in the world at one third the price at which they can be purchased in Europe. No wonder! And if the laws were as lenient to those who stole dry-goods and hardware, as to those who only steal brains, why, I could set up a grocery or a rag-shop to-morrow, and undersell by fifty per cent. all my rivals in the city! Perhaps the world will one day get far enough along to understand that material product is not, after all, the highest of earthly possessions, and that brains, and mind, and genius, and intellect, deserve also their protection and their reward.

Coming fairly under the head of mental producers, are the great and enlightened body of American inventors, who, from the political corruption that reigns at Washington, from the unfaithful and corrupt administration of our laws, and from the dishonest combinations and conspira-

cies of capitalists to control or crush inventive genius, are nearly as bad off as the poor scribblers themselves. The history of the struggles, the disappointments, the extortions, the oppressions and outrages through which alone an inventor can carry his invention, and bring it fairly before the public, would be enough to appal the most sanguine and enthusiastic inventor of some new improvement in the world of science that ever lived. It would be a history reflecting and fastening the deepest moral turpitude upon a majority of the officials—I mean those of all administrations and under all parties, who preside in the various departments of the government. It would be a history of the bribing of congressmen, and chief engineers, and commissioners, and clerks, and secretaries, by cunning and shallow-pated designers, and the fruitless struggle of the really deserving, and, therefore, the honest, who could not understand what it was against which they were contending.

Jealous, as pretends to be our frugal and economical government of expending the people's treasure upon schemes of private interest, or for the aggrandizement of individuals, yet millions are annually thrown away, squandered, wasted absolutely, upon the most worthless men, and still more worthless schemes, while honest possessors of invaluable secrets and discoveries in the world of Art and Science spend their days and nights in fruitless efforts and harrowing suspense, begging and imploring, at the feet of inexorable power, for the means to test their inventions and bring them fairly before the world. Thus are all the great material interests of mankind retarded, embarrassed, and distorted by these selfish, these base and corrupt public servants; while the reign of the false, the hollow, the counterfeit, the atrocious monster, Humbug, is strengthened and perpetuated. In short, as we look down deeper and deeper into this measureless abyss of commercial corruption, and scan more leisurely the elements which centre there, we become more and more pervaded with a sentiment of most discouraging despondency. So firmly seated and well defended seem these horrible evils, so deeply have they struck their roots into the soil and twined themselves about the very heart of society, that finite apprehension can see no limit to their existence, and no means for their extirpation. And were it not for that still small voice of hope that lives for ever in the deep recesses of every human heart, shedding its blessed influence throughout the being that without it would sink prostrate, and let the great battle march on over him, we should indeed despair. But that voice will never be silenced, for it is the voice of God, pleading now and persuading with most seductive eloquence the advent of the happy days to

come, when mankind, released from these soiling and disgraceful garments in which it is now swathed and swaddled, shall rise up in the purity and simplicity of its naked body, and fill all the universe with anthems of love and joy.

CHAPTER V.

THE FASHIONABLE WORLD—ASTOR PLACE OPERA-HOUSE—CRITICS CORNER—A LOOK ROUND THE HOUSE—SOME PORTRAITS THAT WILL BE RECOGNIZED—THE TEETERERS—MORE PORTRAITS—THE VICOMTESSE DE CLAIRVILLE—A LOVE STORY OF SNOBBERY AND THE STAGE.

LET us now, dear reader, with your permission, look in at the opera; and take a glance at the fashionable world in its highest state of development, and most exuberant bloom. But first let us pay a tribute to our dear departed old opera-house in Astor Place—the only real home out-of-doors ever possessed by our New York aristocracy. Let us go back a couple of years, and describe the opera as it was, and as, we fear, it will not be again in a hurry. The house itself, as it was in its palmy days, again is before us. The architect has succeeded in creating the only theatre in the United States which deserves the epithet “elegant.” He is a man not only with ears, and of a proper length too, but with eyes also. While nicely smoothing the projections and rounding off the corners, to prevent the delicate notes of the nightingales on the stage from stubbing their toes and breaking their necks, before coming to the audience, he has artistically composed the fixtures and embellishments of the house into a picture which fills the eye with graceful forms and charming contrasts of color, while the gem-like chandelier sheds an atmosphere of voluptuous lustre over all, like a condensed constellation or a mile or two of the milky way squeezed into the circumference of a lady’s ring. The lightest lapse of the imagination is sufficient to recall the sparkling illusions of youth, until you deem yourself in a veritable world of enchantment. Then this pleasant place, filled with beautiful women, shedding around the indescribable but exquisite fascination of their presence—the faint and impalpable perfumes that penetrate the brain, and enervate the senses with a voluptuous intoxication—the low murmurs that undulate through the air, the mingled flashing of eyes and diamonds that make the bosoms palpitate on which they rest—all blend

their seductive influences to wrap the soul in elysium. And all this is beside the music—for, to tell the truth, to a large proportion of the audience the *entr'acte* intervals are the only pleasant parts of the performance—the squeaking, screeching and drumming from the stage and orchestra, being the long and dreary pauses in the excitement of visiting, quizzing, and flirting, submitted to with well-bred yawns, and half-choked sighs of fashionable resignation.

Before we descend to particulars, we will turn our attention for a moment to the topography of the house, define the boundaries of its various cantons, and indicate the character of its inhabitants. First is the parquette, with its easy and commodious chairs filled with a diversified and medley mass, artists, editors, and critics, with their wives, either in the extreme of undress, including blanket-shawl and velvet bonnet, or else as extremely over-dressed, which, being literally interpreted, would signify not dressed much, if any. A few of the better class of strangers in town, with their families, have taken places in the parquette, to avoid observation, and the half dollar extra; and in the front seats near the orchestra, you may see the wives and sweethearts of the straw-blowers and catgut-scrapers in the orchestra, or of the subordinate performers on the stage. In the middle of the parquette, on either side the aisle, are always more or less of a higher class of audience, who, from ill health, idleness, or some other cause, do not choose to enter into the contest of brocade supremacy on the sofas, or to exhibit their breasts and shoulders beneath the gloating gas-light of the boxes, and who really are fond of the opera for itself alone, and take this means of gratifying their taste, and at the same time avoiding the crash, and struggle, and ostentation, of the stratum next above. In the parquette are to be found many of the warmest and surest friends of the opera, many whose opinions are entitled to respect, and form in reality the only standard of musical criticism which exists in the metropolis. I have at this moment in my eye an old gentleman of fifty-five or sixty, hale and hearty, with a face beaming with the fresh and childlike spirit of sociality and kindness, to which the man of the world at last returns, after all the experiences and suspicious bitternesses and despondencies of middle life. The old gentleman volunteered to tell me, the other evening, that he had never missed a night at the Italian opera in New York. He was a constant attendant at the opera when Malibran appeared in this country in the early stages of its civilization; he was faithful in his devotions to the Montessor troupe; he came cheerfully to the rescue when little Palmo broke his back under the burden of the Chambers street enterprise. And since

the construction of the Astor Place opera-house he has never been absent a single night, rain or shine, subscription or extra, Parodi or Patti, Forti or Benventano. No matter who nor what, he is always there, always seated in the same chair, immediately next to the orchestra, with his gentle blue eyes and mild face turned in enthusiasm upon the performers, and his whole soul evidently absorbed in the music's fascinating spell. Beside him stands, partly leaning against the railing of the orchestra, with his face turned towards the balconies, a well-known frequenter of the opera, once a celebrated fast man among the young roués and nobles of England, now settled down to a polite, well-bred and polished man of the world. He is in request at the dinner tables of the fashionable hotels, welcomed at the soirées of the fashionable and the literati, and altogether seems to be in as fair a way for the enjoyment of a green old age as any one could desire.

Distributed, as we have said, in various parts of the parquette, are those mysterious and all powerful beings, the critics. However, these atomic integers of the great hydra-headed phenomenon, the Press, to a certain extent obey the laws of chemical affinity, and are crystallized or cribbed together in a kind of order, which may be termed the symmetry of higgledy-piggledy. Across the northeast corner of the parquette (all sharp and disagreeable things come from the northeast), a space, about the size of a Cincinnati pig-pen, has been set apart, in which a good proportion of the entire drove of critics are pounded, furnished with arm-chairs, just like gentlemen, and looking very much like respectable people, who pay their debts and speculate in Wall street. They appear altogether too comfortable and well-fed for editors, critics, and literary trash of that sort; but then, so far as the periodical press is concerned, we have changed all that since the days of Goldsmith, and Johnson, and Addison. Our editors are mostly men of means and shrewd business faculties, who know how to make the most of their places and possessions, as well as ever a shopkeeper in Pearl street. Most of these write for half a dozen different papers, morning, evening, weekly, Sunday, monthly, and otherly, while their spare time is occupied in corresponding with country papers, writing puffs for Genin, Jarvis, Sands, and Gouraud, or bringing some creaking and rheumatic panorama or paralytic peep-show into popularity, at two shillings a line. On the whole, therefore, they live well, and are not much more overworked than an omnibus horse; while the necessity of constantly producing and scraping together out of their brains about so much every week, prevents them ever making a serious and sustained effort to see what they

could do. They are generally capital fellows, free from envy, malice, and all uncharitableness, and jog along together through life without those childish and ridiculous squabbles so disgracefully constant with their more dignified and pretentious brethren in the political department of journalism. However, we shall postpone what we have to say in detail of these gentlemen until we come to our chapter upon the press, in which we will group them all together.

And now for a look at the house. Let us first take a peep about the precincts of the balcony sofas and boxes of the two sub-amphitheatre strata, and we shall behold the concentrated essence of the ostentation, fashion, wealth, beauty, and snobbery of New York. There are not so many pretty women here perhaps, nor handsome men, as among the audience of the minor theatres; but they are undeniably better dressed, more stylish in their appearance, and diffuse an air of good breeding about them that could not be mistaken. Most of them have received every possible advantage of education, as we are now in the second generation of our pedigree, and the leading members of our aristocracy are the sons of the mechanics, artisans, laborers, and soap-boilers who established the race. They, therefore, have been delicately nurtured, and seem to take by instinct to the task of making the best use of the fortunes squeezed together by their vulgar progenitors. Many of them have passed a considerable time in Europe, where, as the best to be had from America, they have been received into unquestionable circles of rank and fashion; and, quick of apprehension, prone to imitation, and overflowing with social ambition, as is every son and daughter of Yankee-doodledom, they could not fail to acquire, to a certain extent, the graces and the manners of those with whom they were brought in contact. It is true that they are prone to the most ridiculous mistakes, which expose them at once for what they are, to thorough-bred people of fashion; and, in consequence, our wealthiest and most snobbish families are nothing but objects of ridicule and contempt to the foreigners of real birth and breeding with whom they are brought in contact. However, all things considered, they are a pretty good specimen of Yankee aristocracy, and are, perhaps, as sensible, as honest, as virtuous, and as chaste, as any other aristocracy under heaven. Their reigning defect and disqualification is insolence and ill-bred vulgarity—our true aristocrat being inherently gentle, and thoroughly despising everything like insolence to his inferiors in station.

The immense deficiency of the New York fashionable society is perceptible at a glance. It is not in display, not in accomplishment, not in

magnificence of appointment and entertainment, not even in liberality and a certain lavish expenditure, which is generally, however, vulgarly overdone; but it is in the irremediable want of easy deference to themselves and to others, which distinguishes our American society, or at any rate the more sumptuous and presumptuous classes of it, on all occasions and under all circumstances. It is to be hoped, however, that a few more generations will refine, purify, and enrich the blood of our aristocratic families, and endow a millionaire, and his wife and daughters, with some approach to the good breeding and gentle manners of an intelligent family in the middle class of life. Not, however, until the factitious importance at present conceded to mercantile pursuits, and the business of making fortunes upon the capital of others, is forced to assume its own proper dimensions, will anything like a true social dignity, elegance, refinement, and aristocracy, ever prevail in this democratic metropolis. The first place in public estimation must be occupied by others than prosperous shopkeepers and successful speculators, before we may pride ourselves upon a true and creditable social aristocracy.

Among the most conspicuous and beautiful women in the house to-night we observe two, evidently sisters, by their resemblance in style and features, and especially in the luxuriance of their shining black ringlets. They are in the box nearest the stage, in the second circle. These are the daughters of a distinguished lawyer and man of genius in the capital of the sunny South. One of them is the fashionable and dashing wife of one of our most desperate financial speculators, whose ups and downs in the great gambling drama of Wall street have ruined thousands and shaken heretofore that vicinity to its centre. Not long since, he met with a series of reverses, which, to use a technical phrase of the faro-table, quite as proper in Wall street, as in Park Place, "thoroughly cleaned him out," and the gravest suspicions were even noised about respecting his non-observance of the conventional and easy code of honor that prevails in that golden realm. At all events, he manifested the possession of the domestic and nepotic affections in no ordinary degree; for however wide or deep might have been the sufferings inflicted upon his creditors, his family showed no signs of the misfortune; and, as was the case with a similar event occurring no later than last summer, the ladies are still as conspicuous, as gay, and as magnificently caparisoned as in the palmiest days of their husbands' good luck at the cards. This, by the way, is the usual condition of things among all gamblers, who, whatever their reverses, or runs of bad luck, always manage to live at the best, dress, ride, and dine, in the most

extravagant and sumptuous manner, and keep their women folks rigged out like South American queens, in diamonds, feathers, and expensive gewgaws, worth, at least, fully as much as themselves. Whatever we may be disposed to say of the morality or immorality of blacklegs and stockgamblers, we must confess that they make the very best husbands in the world.

The lady we are describing is a woman partaking largely of the matchless talent of the father, and possessing great powers of fascination, both in manners and conversation. She is deemed by the admirers of that style of thing, excessively handsome, and is by no means chary of displaying her charms and accomplishments to the best advantage. Some little time ago, her dinner-parties were the most piquant affairs of the season; and, by her wit and fascinations, she managed to assemble around her the cream of all the desirable classes and professions—artists, actors, men of letters, and brilliant conversationists, together with those dazzling and yet dangerous women of an uncertain class between the confines of close society and the open common of gay life. In these assemblages enjoyment was the one sole aim and purpose, and it is confessed by those who were admitted to those latitudinarian rites that they were everything intoxicating, delicious, and seductive. Among the brilliant and rather startling exhibitions in this circle were the performances of the elegant hostess herself, who, apparelled in the gay, picturesque, and scanty costume of a peasant Polonaise, would, after the feast was over, and the company had sought the drawing-room, bound like a Bayadere among them, and set their hearts beating, and brains whirling, with the dizzy undulations of a dance that would have brought down the house at Niblo's and crazed all the critics of the morning papers. Beside her, leans over the railing of the box, her sister, younger, and extremely piquante—her delicate curls twining like tendrils round the half-transparent temples, glowing like pomegranates in the sun. Her black eyes stream a light clear across the house; and no matter in what direction you may be looking, you cannot escape the sense of her magnificent presence during the entire evening. If she be but as happy as she looks, she must indeed be an enviable creature.

The box next to this is filled with over-dressed and genuine shopkeeper-looking women, who require no particular mention. They are a collection of the common type of New York beauty, over painted, over dressed, and over supercilious. Further along, beyond the crimson-curtained boxes, we encounter several of the most fashionable and pretentious of our aristocratic families. Mr. De D — occupies that

box next the curtains, with the ladies of a family whose name goes back to the time of the Revolution, and was then honored and trusted. The ladies are dressed in unimpeachable taste, and their manner is more subdued and truly aristocratic than that of many whose pretensions are by no means so undisputed to the title of exclusiveness. Further along, near the middle of the house, is a box furnished with crimson cushions, got up at the occupant's own expense. The owner is one of the wealthiest and decidedly the most distinguished-looking man of fashion in the house, or in the city. His wife is also a very elegant looking woman, faultlessly *costumée*, and whose coiffure and dresses are regularly imported from Paris. She is of a family generally acknowledged to stand among the front rank of our aristocracy, although they have not achieved that position without hard fighting, and except through a storm of sneering ridicule from former associates and equals, who have either not been so talented or so lucky as themselves. The pair are a model of conjugal devotion and felicity. They are never seen asunder, not even in walks and rides. At Saratoga, they parade the gravelled promenade at Marvin's, lovingly arm-in-arm, or sit in their pleasant parlor overlooking the green and shady terraces of that enchanting spot, amusing themselves by both reading from the same newspaper, or sipping from the same sherry-cobbler. Their style is unquestionable, their appearance elegant, and their position, so far as we may judge by outward signs, one of unalloyed happiness. The husband is a man of fine taste and liberal views, a generous patron of the arts, and aider of worthy enterprises. He deserves his good fortune and his charming wife, while she is equally justifiable in being devoted to him.

Our next conspicuous and fashionable subject in this upper circle is that tall and supercilious looking woman, very thin and delicate in person, and with a nose decidedly *retroussé*. She also had a terrible struggle and a long fight before the victory was won, and she was established as an undisputed member of the *haut ton*—and we believe the contest is even now occasionally renewed. She is not decidedly a handsome woman, yet there is something about her which inevitably makes you turn and look at her a second time, and ever after causes you to be aware, unconsciously, of her presence or absence from the scene. Seated deferentially behind her, is an elderly, thin gentleman, with iron-grey hair, who might very well have been the original of Douglas Jerrold's "Man Made of Money." Few persons in the community have wielded a more powerful influence than he. In respect to the credit of firms and individuals in Wall street, his word to a large class is law;

while now and then the whole street is made to palpitate through all its extremes by his movements, as if his fingers were pressing upon the very heart of that anomalous monster, the Stock Exchange. All he is, however, or ever was, or ever can hope to be, is by the power of money. With the exception of that, few in any class are not as well entitled to distinction as he. He has just one faculty—that of making money; and to its development and exercise his whole life and being have been faithfully devoted. Economy, abstemiousness, and self-denial—the bases of all accumulation of wealth—he possesses in an eminent degree. Never in all his life has he been known to spend a sixpence for anything but the bare necessities of life—that is, for himself. As to the immense amounts said to be foolishly and uselessly squandered by his wife in a system of ostentation as unbecoming as it is intrinsically vulgar, that is neither here nor there. It is said by those who know her best, that she openly married him for his money, and that the whole boast of her virgin life was the avowed intention of thus disposing of her charms and fascinations. Born in a humble rank, she possessed a scheming and an ambitious heart; and having looked out for her bargain and disposed of herself to the best advantage and the highest bidder, plainly and above board, like a sale of fancy stocks, “*r. w.*,” she hastened to publicly announce the completion of the transaction, and to give her husband unequivocal evidences of his position and rights in the premises. If they find themselves mutually abhorrent to each other, they have nobody to accuse but themselves. But with all this we have nothing to do. Should we institute an investigation into the statistics of wedded bliss among our aristocracy, God knows where we might stop, or into what fearful abysses of misery and crime we might not plunge. Therefore, taking it for granted that our grey-haired financier and his young wife are as well off in this respect as many of our neighbors, we pass on to the husband himself.

The head of this aristocratic and dashing family followed the common destiny of his tribe, and commenced life as an errand boy, check collector, &c., &c., for a broker’s den in Wall street; and as he kept steadily on, with his eye fixed upon one point—to become rich—and was endowed with iron perseverance and great shrewdness, he has long ago succeeded. But the principal means by which he and hundreds of our money aristocracy have accomplished this, if things and actions bore their right names, would be called swindling and fraud. In a word, he is a leading stock gambler; and his immense gains have chiefly arisen from buying and selling fancy stocks, and from other similar operations,

upon an unreal market, kept up or depressed, as the needs and objects of himself and his brother-gamblers required, or as there were pigeons in the market to be plucked.

Our readers who have gone with us thus far will not require to be told that, in our opinion, this species of gambling is far more dishonorable and disgraceful than faro-dealing, or thimble-rigging; and that those engaged in it are, to all intents and purposes, blacklegs, and no more entitled to pass for respectable citizens than the fancy sporting men and flash covies about town, who embellish the narrow and back-breaking seats at Burton's, to have a laugh at religion with Aminidab Sleek, or garnish the orchestra stalls at Wallack's, to ogle Miss Keene, and admire the plump ankles and other attributes of Annie Lonsdale. And yet, not only do our brokers and stock gamblers pass for respectable citizens, but they and their families assume an air of pretentious arrogance, elbow honest men aside, and set up for arbiters and dictators of society!

See yonder haughty and bold-looking woman, scanning the audience with a defiant sweep of her pearl opera-glass, and directing all eyes upon herself by the queenly magnificence of her costume and jewelry. Look well at her, and see if you can detect in her appearance the signs of one of those so much commiserated working girls, whose lamentable condition draws such sympathetic floods of tears from the ink-stands of our philanthropic scribblers. But a few years ago, that haughty head, now flaunting proudly under one of Martell's twenty-five dollar feathers, was bent industriously over the miscellaneous patch-work that came in her way; and those dainty fingers loaded with diamonds, were busy discharging the manifold offices of her father's humble household. But now, not one in all this gaudy and shallow crowd is or feels more intensely the aristocrat than she. The capacity for luxury is the ruling instinct of woman's nature, bursting out into full and perfect bloom upon the first patch of prolific soil, or beneath the first ray of congenial sunshine. A woman always becomes her riches, her fine clothes, her carriage, her brilliant drawing-room, the fashionable assemblage, and the highest walk in Vanity Fair—as soon as she is able to compass them. Beside, our democratic empress knows full well that she is full as good as the rest—why, therefore, should she be afraid? By the mere and absolute force of money and perseverance, she stands and moves at this moment (though, it is true, not without, now and then, a fight for it) in the van of the snobby aristocracy of this snobby metropolis. We could write a volume of homilies on this one cold-hearted, trifling lady; but *cui bono*? She is only one of the ephemera who float for a moment

across the broad beams of human life, aimless and valueless, save for the lesson she lends to those who have the wit to find it out and the virtue to profit by it.

Encroaching upon the crimson-curtained boxes at the other side of the house, we stumble apologizing past a couple of boxes filled with portions of the indiscriminate crowd, pretty and engaging enough in their way, with one of the handsomest and best-dressed members of which the distinguished "Joe Sykes" is engaged in earnest conversation—lending for a moment, by the graces of his sprightly wit and high-bred manners, an air of distinction to the entire box. But let us rest our glass a moment upon that small and choleric-looking gentleman in the box nearest the stage. His quiet and pretty young daughter, modestly attired in black silk, and with a diamond of almost priceless value on her yet undeveloped bosom, is still too young to have made her appearance regularly ticketed in society, and only comes now and then to the Opera by pretty stealth. The father is one of the most devoted patrons of the Opera, a permanent subscriber, stockholder, and proprietor of the edifice itself, and not indisposed to exercise, on all proper occasions, his opinions and his judgment upon questions relating to the progress and conduct of this aristocratic national amusement. His patent of nobility is of a more ancient date than those of many of his neighbors and compeers; and, unaffectedly disdainful and haughty in his manners, he gives himself little concern about his position, and thereby doubly confirms it. He is a man of education and taste, but too unbending and ungenial in his temper to obtain from life more than about ten per cent. of the enjoyment of which it is capable.

Dropping our glass perpendicularly to the balcony sofa, we chance upon the face and figure of one of the lady patronesses of art and literature in her highly-favored seat. Perhaps you think her a little old. My dear sir, you are entirely mistaken—she is by no means so old as her daughter, who sits immediately next her, and who has recently married one of the youngest and handsomest fashionable young bloods about town. Before our lady patroness went to Europe she was, to be sure, a little *passée*; but a tour on the continent, and a six months' residence in Paris did wonders, and she came back as fresh and rosy as a bride. Envious and malicious people assert that she is too positively white, and technically read in the dictionary of fashion, very much "assisted;" but what that means we have not the slightest idea. Our glass knows nothing of it, and we set it down therefore as rank calumny. And, by the way, it is astonishing how far this spirit of scandal will carry some people.

We have even been present when ladies of notoriously phalansterian habits and ideas have united furiously in tearing to pieces some absent unfortunate, who happened to belong to a larger circle, or possessed a more genial disposition than herself. Indeed, the general result of our observations is, that in fashionable society a woman who sins only brilliantly, falls beneath the envy rather than the indignation of her associates. If she could divest herself of the *éclat*, the sin might pass unnoticed.

By the way, we heard the other day of an instance of feminine perseverance, tact and management in the gratification of a social ambition, which is well worth the trouble of recording. A lady whose husband had amassed considerable money in the manufacture of boots, and who was herself possessed of no ordinary degree of intelligence and smartness, conceived that at length the time had arrived for carrying into execution her long-cherished plan of effecting an entrance into fashionable life. For this purpose she secured the services of a poor female friend, whose position, however, was unquestionable among the exclusive families, who in consideration of certain favors and gratuities, promised to exert her influence in introducing her to the approaching soirée of Mrs. Blank, of Blank Place. So far did these conspirators against the dignity and purity of the fashionable New York escutcheons carry their designs, that the wife of our friend the bootmaker, was actually taken in company with her fashionable friend, to the blank mansion, and let up the back stairs into the retiring room. While here, however, the heart of the patroness failed her; and, fearful of jeopardizing her own position, instead of taking her protégée by the hand, and leading her boldly into the drawing-room, and introducing her to the lady of the mansion, as she had promised to do, she slipped down stairs, made her way quietly into the parlor, and left her poor friend disconsolate up stairs. After waiting for an unreasonable time for her friend, our heroine went down stairs, stood painfully irresolute for a moment under the glare of the gas-lights, undergoing the inquisitive glances of the porters in the hall; then, reëntering her carriage, she found her way home in a furious passion, and arousing her docile and contented husband from a sleep that would have done honor to the innocence of Saint Crispin himself, she swore with a terrible lady's oath that she would yet be at the head of the snobs of New York. Her prediction has been fulfilled, and her aspiration gratified. Not three months have passed by since her palace in the Fifth Avenue—for it is indeed a palace—was thrown open to seven hundred and fifty guests, while as many more, the biggest of whom would have

gone on their knees for an invitation, and who were among the front rank of those in the circle where she had been so cruelly slighted, were deliberately overlooked. The party was the festival of the fashionable season. Those who were there were somebodies, and those who were not, were nobodies; and you may be sure that among the nobodies figured conspicuously our quondam fashionable friend and the lady Blank, of Blank Place. It was a triumph hardly and fairly won, and, doubtless, well repaid her for the pains, and humiliations, and vexations it must have cost her. She now may consider herself fairly established in the world, and may ape on a smaller scale the soirées of the charming Lady Blessington—give levées to the literati, get up desperate flirtations with the smaller toadies of obscure greatness, and give literary dinners, at which a great many more good things go into the guests' mouths than come out of them. By perseverance and tact she has succeeded in making herself the centre of a circle; and we have even heard that one of our innumerable great poets, of whom nobody ever heard, actually dedicated a volume of his works to her. At all events she really has brains, and a style of beauty piquante and exciting; and, having imbibed a taste for music, she attends the opera, not only for the purpose of being seen, but also really for the pleasure of hearing. Between the acts she receives numerous visits, evidently from the distingué appearance of the visitors, voluntary ones. She treats them all with the same haughty, supercilious politeness, as if she were queen, and they her vassals. The husband of this lady, whom one would imagine at least Secretary of State, or something of that kind, never appears in public with her. Whether she will not permit it, or he is not fond of society, we do not know. The probability is that having been all his life confined to his shop, he does not care to go out. He has not, like his wife, the power of keeping up gracefully with his changed fortunes; and, although now a wealthy aristocrat, whose wife flaunts among the proudest, and sets the laws of fashionable society, he is still the humble, pains-taking and contented shopkeeper in bearing and aspect. This is almost invariably the fate of the man-machine who digs and scrapes together the money upon which his wife and daughters cut a dash, and his sons grow up "fast" members of young New York.

The history and position of this family furnish a striking illustration of the democratic abstractions about equality, and point unerringly to the one and only test of one man's superiority to another. It is not blood, nor education, nor virtue, it is merely money. Look round this brilliant house upon this fashionable throng, and you cannot find a soli-

tary exception to this rule. Those who occupy the high places, do so solely because they have *money*. Take that from them, and they would slide down unnoticed, and their footmen and chambermaids—so they got possession of the *money*—might take possession also of their seats and their position without a murmur of disapprobation. True, there are a few men of real talent here; but they are mostly journalists, critics, and such trash, and are penned up as we have said in a corner, down there by the big fiddle, where not an eye glance by any possibility ever reaches them. “We had no money—we were nothing. They have no money—they are nothing.” Such is the insolent yet sagacious logic which alone passes current among the aristocracy of New York.

Suppose we give you, by way of variety, a specimen of the Opera House dandy of New York? There are as many kinds of dandies as of crabs, almonds, and Baptists, namely—hard-shelled and soft-shelled. The soft-shelled are the most numerous of the dandy tribe, but they are so inevitably soft, and destitute of characteristics, that they are a very unprofitable theme for writing about, or in fact for any other purpose, save filling up the chinks in a polka or entertaining the old ladies in a still-life party. They are very contemptible, very happy, and very harmless—completely wrapped up in their nicely-embroidered self-love and waistcoats, and fortunately insensible to the ridicule which they never fail to inspire among sensible men, and especially among sensible women. But the hard-shelled dandy is a different sort of animal. He is a rare compound of impudence, vanity, toadyism, and superciliousness, and, besides, he must be possessed of no inconsiderable share of brains. We have a fair specimen of this species now under the focus of our glass. He is attired not only in the height of the fashion, but with a certain bizarre recklessness, which, however becoming it might be in a wild Indian, or Cuffee in the cotton-field, seems strangely out of taste in that symposium of style and taste, the Opera House. His trousers are of the decided Boweryish cut, and measure more than the full lawful sixty inches round the bottom. His coat is very natty and short-waisted, and the innumerable small buttons shine in the gas-light as if he had eyes breaking out all over his body. He wears a diaphanous French embroidered shirt-bosom, with an immense pair of collars, upon which each ear sits awkwardly astride, like a school-boy on a high fence. His vest is extra long and pointed, and he wields an opera glass almost as large as our own. But his cravat, that is the crowning effort of his genius, the characteristic charm of his appearance. It is as red as blood; and as he sits leaning over the white railing of the balco-

ny, poking his glass into every pretty face in the semi-circle, his neck seems as if it had caught fire, and there is a movement among the b'hoys in the amphitheatre, as if they were about to run for the machine. However, they would find that our dandy is not easily put out.

Now, certainly to look at this dandy little gentleman, and observe the airs he puts on, and the intense satisfaction beams in his face, one would imagine that he was at the very head of the social fabric. His history will show of what stuff the pretensions of our aristocracy are made. The father of our young Redbreast is a respectable tradesman, and has amassed a nice little sum from the profits of his business. His son, Tom, was always a scapegrace; and after ineffectual trials to reform and make something of him, the attempt was abandoned, and he was left to shift for himself. We believe he commenced the world as a clerk in a jobbing house, but of this we are not positively certain. The first of our authentic records finds him keeping a little cigar store in Broadway, dispensing the fragrant weed impartially to all comers, at five for a shilling. We next hear of him in a small dry goods store, where he works all day like a dog, and cuts a tiptop swell all night, on two hundred dollars and under. We heard, too, we believe, that he went into business for himself, but shortly burst up, and was again thrown upon his oars. The old gentleman's purse, however, is long; and when all other ingenious devices fail to raise the wind, the old governor has, of course, as is very natural and proper, to bleed. In the face of this well-known history as to his origin and character, the imperturbable coolness of young Redbreast is such that he would, in any but a plebeian society where titles are not known, be taken for a duke's son at the very least. He is the terror of all the poodles of his tribe, whom he never spares, but slays remorselessly with a word. His wit is not keen, but depends for its effect upon a certain bluntness and discrimination of character quite unusual and unexpected in one of his tribe. Altogether, although he is a confirmed dandy and coxcomb himself, yet he is held in great dread by the rest of the species; and if he would only take the time and trouble to go about it, we have no doubt he would exterminate the entire race—including, we devoutly hope, himself.

Do you see that thin, nervous, sanguine-temperamented man over yonder on the balcony side sofa, sitting beside a fine-looking woman, who is evidently still the pet of her lord and master. The gentleman is quite aged, yet the enthusiasm and self-complacency of his disposition have kept his face almost unploughed, and his gestures and movements

are as sprightly and youthful as his eldest son's would be, if he had one. If there ever was a man fond of music—devoted heart and soul to the opera—it is Professor ——. Not only does he attend regularly every public performance, rain or shine, and be the opera old or new, subscribers' night or off night, extra night or benefit, but he seldom or never misses a day or night rehearsal. They say that he has an 'extensive practice-chamber—having long since retired from the more arduous outdoor duties of his profession—and we know that he has a great many visits to make, and a great many lectures to deliver—so that we cannot see for the life of us how he is enabled to keep time with all the movements of Maretzek's baton. Yet, go when you will, there he is, seated in an attitude of intense and restless attention, his little twinkling gray eye fixed firmly upon the performers, and his hand involuntarily moving in concert with that of the conductor. He knows exactly when the big trombone is to come in, and when the fagotto should have taken up a note it has forgot to. He is evidently out of his element in front of the house, but would be perfectly at home behind the green top of that Jersey carry-all, whence the prompter dictates the words to his forgetful and obstreperous crew. Yes, if fate had made Professor — a prime tenore, he would have married a prima donna, and of course been an enviable man. Eh! Benedetti?

Of all the legitimate opera aristocracy on these sofas (and the illegitimate ones too), our professor is the only man we can see, who is really entitled to the distinction. He has intellect and genius, with which he has cut and carved his way (sometimes, it is true, over the dead bodies of his patients and subjects) to a well-earned and lucrative distinction. Supercilious as he is to his inferiors, he is deferential to his superiors, well-bred and entertaining to his equals, and with a delicious lisp and velvet voice, which especially qualifies him for making progress among that sex with whom accomplished doctors are so great favorites. We yield him our respect, not on account of his position nor his wealth, but simply because he has brains; and so we kiss our hand to his still elegant and attractive dame, and pass on.*

And by the way, speaking of handsome ladies, we would delicately venture a hint to those luxuriously developed young girls sitting immediately under the balcony side railings. They are certainly unconscious of the beautiful and extensive prospect enjoyed by the eyes of the young

* Those who recognize this portrait will remember, with grief, that since it was drawn, the original has ceased to exist. I trust that his friends will not think it presumptuous that I have retained the sketch.

gentlemen who lean over the railing talking to them. They are, however, by no means singular. All over the house, and especially in the front boxes up stairs, you can see groups of young men gathered behind some audaciously-undressed beauty, who leans back in her seat, and turns up her face, for the purpose of conversing at her ease. We are determined that if ever our daughters go to the opera, they shall either have a private box, or wear high-necked dresses.

Those "spicily-dressed women" on a front sofa, with a very young gentleman sitting between them, his head thatched with perfectly smooth and shining hair—are they not pretty? One of the ladies has set off her white neck and beautiful arms with a black lace scarf, and on her throat and down her delicate bust, gleam rows and roses of diamonds, glittering like the chandelier, seen through the little end of our opera-glass. That very young gentleman is overwhelmed with his good fortune, and really does not seem to know what to do with himself. Envidable dog!

And by the way, as they take their seats (they have just come in), we observe that they belong to that interesting class of femininities described by a writer as "teeterers." They, and the class to which they belong, deserve especial mention, as they are to be seen not only at the opera-house, but in all other public places—in church, at concerts, in the omnibusses, on the ferry-boats, in railroad cars, steamboats; everywhere where that pretty animal—young lady—is indigenous or exotic, there may be seen the teeterers. Physiologists and anatomists have not yet, that we are aware of, discovered that the knees and ankles of young ladies are furnished with an extra pair of patent spiral spring muscles, which keeps them when standing or moving about, continually on the teeter. Those of our readers not well versed in orthoëpical lore may not know what teetering is. Nevertheless, it is a good old Anglo-Saxon word, and the best definition we can give of it, is to say, that when a woman teeters, she makes motions as much as possible like those sand-snipes, or tip-ups; found along the shores of our rivers, and with which every sportsman is familiar. Overhaul your "Frank Forester's Sportsman's Manual," and when found make a note of. Let us take aim now with our double-barrelled glass, and bring down a couple of these teeterers—a class of ornithologies not laid down in that most comprehensive work of the most immortal biographer of birds, Audubon. There, quick! Look in the centre private box, yonder to the left. Here is a bevy of full-grown teeterers just flown in, and making the preparatory teeters before alighting on the crimson-cushioned chairs. They are fine specimens of the

bird—full-fed, full-breasted, and of magnificent plumage. As they enter the box, each of the pretty creatures stands still a moment, surveying the house, and drinking in the intoxicating magnetic effervescence that always rises to the lips in an agreeable crowd. Then she gives a little teeter, and moves half a step forward, as if she had trodden upon a pebble. Then the beautiful white silk opera-cloak is thrown off, and the Medicean shoulder, daintily dressed (as French cooks dress shoulders, only to make them more piquant and exciting) in ravishingly thin illusion. Then another little teeter, and a deliciously helpless tumble into the front seat—another good long teeter, and she sinks at last into the chair. All the others follow suit, and the whole party are finally ranged in order, ready to quiz their acquaintances, criticize their neighbors' dresses, ogle the beaux, and now and then, perhaps, listen to the music.

You think the teetering process, then, is over? You were never more mistaken in your life. In fact it has but just begun. If you will pay attention, you will see that the vertebrae of these young ladies are furnished with the patent spiral spring muscles, as well as their knees and ankles; and hips too, for ought we know to the contrary. They scarcely set still a single instant. If one of them but flirt her Spanish sandal wood fan, she accompanies the movement with a teeter. If she adjust that cloud of illusion clinging dream-like about her neck and prolonging itself into the blushing morning of her bosom—she teeters. When one lovely arm wearies of holding the glass, and she changes it to the other jeweled hand, the pretty manoeuvre is accompanied by a teeter, which she no doubt thinks still prettier. In short, as every excursion of a lover terminates at the dwelling of his beloved, so every movement of a thorough going opera bird ends in a teeter.

The act is down, and every lady spruces up the bouquet on her bosom and adjusts her ringlets or her neck-gear, for the expected visitations of her forked radish acquaintances. Beautiful necks are stretched over the railing to see what acquaintance has left his seat, or modest eyes are cast demurely down, assisting the ears to catch the first sound of a visitor's footsteps. And now begins a general teetering. Sofa after sofa, box after box, all seem as if they had been suddenly smitten by the spell of the all potent genii of the three-legged stool, and set cantering against their will. The game grows intensely exciting, and you begin to wonder where it will all end. In good time, however, the curtain rises, and the teetering subsides.

It was for a long time impossible for us to get at the clue of this teetering business, and we were on the point of giving the matter up in

despair; when, happening one evening at the house of a literary lady, and observing that all the petticoated nobodies in the room made extravagant use of the fashionable teeter, while the real celebrities present on the occasion were as staid and quiet as ever,—we at length hit upon the solution of the mystery. These teeterers are dying to be distinguished in some way from the “common people.” They have not brains enough to do it by talking. It must, therefore, be effected in some cheaper way. Teetering is a ridiculous thing—the sensible ones will never think of doing anything half so laughable. Teetering will be all our own—therefore, let us form ourselves into a class and conjugate the verb to teeter in all its inflections and genuflections,—thus: I teeter, Thou teeterest, She teeters,—We teeter, You teeter, Everybody teeters. So it turns out that those who exhibit the greatest activity in their heels are the most deficient in their heads—a homely but most natural and antithetical conclusion, and one that we advise a young gentleman to think well of before he undertakes to put one of these opera birds in his game bag.

Yonder on the front sofa, near the middle of the house, is a real merchant prince. We have all heard a great deal about “merchant princes;” but those who have come in contact with any of the great mass of individuals who pass under this title must have been supremely disgusted at finding their magnificent illusions so utterly destroyed. Perhaps there does not exist in the civilized world a class of persons who, generally speaking, are a more perfect antithesis to all our ideas of “princes” than the snobs of New York. Nearly all of them sprung from not only humble but low origin; they retain all the littleness of envy, the meanness of emulation, and the stinginess about money which characterize menials—persons whose very position precludes every idea of honor and chivalry, as a necessary corollary of their profession, and for the exercise of which they would be disgraced. For the most part, our parvenu aristocracy, who live in magnificent houses, and whose families ride in beautiful carriages, glitter at the Opera and give royal entertainments, are of the lowest grade of vulgarity—a vulgarity, too, which is incurable because it is innate, and which displays itself despite their wealth, despite their position, despite their exclusive and well-sifted associations, and despite their accomplishments, at every moment. The father always appears sneaking and insignificant, and would more likely be taken for a delinquent footman than for the master of the house. Do what he will, he cannot forget the time when he ran of errands, delivered packages, and trembled in his well-worn shoes when his master conde-

scended to frown upon him or to speak to him. He never hears the door-bell ring without a nervous twitching of the flexors and extensors, as if he were about to run and open it; and if a lady enters, he receives her with an air of humble obsequiousness and a profusion of servile genuflexions, which seem to say in very writhe, "What kind of article will you be pleased to look at to-day, madam?"

But the mistress of the family demonstrates her vulgarity in another, though no less unmistakable manner. Women have no sense of justice—at least such women; and they forget their own low origin and shake off all its humiliations and decorous sentiments without a twinge of remorse, the very moment their means enable them to do so. Go about the fashionable shops of a pleasant morning—visit a fashionable concert, and endeavor modestly to get a seat—go anywhere among the women of whom we speak—and what do you see? Abundance of rich dresses, fine equipages and appointments, truly. But at the same time you see nothing but fat and coarsely-made persons, large and strong hands and feet—hoarse and croaking voices, giving utterance to the very lowest species of common-place and scandal, in horrible grammar and worse pronunciation. Yes, we ourselves have heard again and again the awful "you was-es," the "I done its," the "bens," and the "sawrs" of the stable and the scullery, issuing in vulgar tones from lips whose owners were enveloped in the costliest brocades, dazzling with diamonds, and who really give laws to "fashionable society." As to the manners of these lady patronesses of our New York aristocracy, they are rude and insolent to an extent that would be laughable if it were not so pitiable. They not only are never guilty of any of those graceful concessions which confer such innocent pleasure upon both giver and receiver, and impart real interest to even the most casual intercourse of well-bred people, but they will go out of their way to insult a person not so well dressed as themselves, or to stare a modest woman out of countenance. Their talk is loud and boisterous, and richly gimped and fringed with slang and laughter; and it is a general custom with them, whenever an opportunity offers, to jostle and push aside their *inferiors*—with much the same feeling, we may suppose, that Irish servant girls and negroes always persist in taking the wall of ladies and other white folks. We can tell a tiptop fashionable woman by her swagger, as far as a sailor can recognize a Dutch lugger. In one word, while in real well-bred society every one is solicitous to contribute everything in his power to the convenience and pleasure of every one else, our aristocracy are constantly on the watch to detect some means of annoying others and making themselves as

disagreeable as insolence, ignorance, and a total insensibility to ridicule can accomplish. Such, we venture to say, will not be pronounced by those who know, an overdrawn picture of the snob-aristocracy of New York.

But there are exceptions, and distinguished ones. If you will look there on the front balcony seats, just at the left of the principal entrance, you will see several members of a family who do not in any degree deserve these censures, but are really and unaffectedly what good-hearted, sensible and fortunate people ought to be.

The old gentleman is a fine, rather distinguished-looking person, dressed with scrupulous neatness, and with a strong predisposition to taste and fashion. In fact, we had better admit at once that he is evidently conscious of his good looks, and is—to say all in one word—something of a dandy. His appearance, however, is strictly decorous and unostentatious; and he is altogether a splendid specimen of the “fine old Yankee gentleman.”

The eldest son is from thirty-eight to forty years of age, and is also quite gray, and like his three brothers, is a fair representative of the paternal character. The wife and daughters, daughters-in-law and brothers-in-law, are all unexceptionable and worthy; and altogether the family are a credit to themselves and an honor to the community. If our “aristocracy” were composed of *such* individuals, we should have nothing to censure.

Over a quarter of a century ago the head of this family—an intelligent and comprehensive minded Yankee from New Hampshire—immigrated to this city and commenced business in a humble way. Gradually he proceeded from success to success, until he at last found himself at the head of an immense and profitable business, and with a numerous and interesting family of boys and girls growing up about him, some of them just preparing to enter into society. At this time one of those terrible financial cholas to which our country is subject swept over New York, and the great merchant found himself bankrupt. He immediately wound up, paying sixty cents on the dollar, and getting a release from his creditors. With the courage and calmness of a true man he went to work again; and in a few years made up his losses and paid all his old creditors every cent due them, with interest. This gave him an immense credit and reputation; and in a short time the house had more than recovered its former wealth and standing, and is now the center of a very extensive trade. Some time ago the old gentleman gave up the business entirely to his sons, and retired in dignified and quiet content-

ment. His children are kind-hearted, polished and unostentatious people; and whenever we see any of them, in public or in private, we pause to thank them silently for the refreshing contrast they afford to that mean and groveling world of hatred, envy and despicable vanity amid which they move.

And now for a pleasant look about the house; for the audience is very brilliant, and Parodi, whom Italy has just begun to appreciate, is filling the whole arena with a palpitating excitement by her gigantic performance of the *Lucrezia*. Let us commence at the extremity of the balcony toward Eighth Street. First, a pair of calm classical faces, surmounting, one a white opera cloak with a square little dainty French collar, and the other a bright garnet-colored jacket, so intense as to amount to a real crimson. They look about very little, and evidently came to hear the music. Immediately behind them is seating herself a fair and delicate-colored blonde, with pale blue eyes, plump arms of the faint hue of summer roses, and head faultlessly set on and matchlessly set off by a simple pearl-white head-dress of chenille.

On the third row of the balcony, in front of Commonplace Area, are two fine-looking creatures, full of life and spirits, always smiling when not laughing, and always flirting their fans when there is nothing more agreeable to flirt with. They are regular attendants at the opera, and enjoy it evidently to the full, though not very critically. Even should they discover faults, they are far too good-natured to take notice of them.

In a box half round to the centre of Oblivion Row sit a very distinguished-looking party. They are the young wife of a prosperous speculator in steamboats and a man of wealth and fashion—surrounded by her pretty sisters and relatives, with the handsome and happy husband, evidently in the highest state of earthly beatitude.

In the front row of the balcony, rather nearer the stage, sits a small, intellectual-looking man, with a high-spirited, tastefully-dressed lady on either side—his wife, probably, and sister-in-law. The ladies are evidently made of the finer porcelain of humanity's clay, and their faces are like fair lamps lit with pleasant thoughts.

On either side of the aisle, nearly opposite, are a mother and daughter, the mother with a perpetual smile and the daughter with all that unconscious gravity, so charming in infancy and girlhood, and which so often bursts out into the most buoyant gaiety and wit.

But see that lady in pink, in the extreme upper corner of the balcony, Astor Placeward—how imperially she leans against the little pillar, and

sweeps the horizon with her glass. An arm, hopeless of parallel, save in its fellow, firm as ivory yet pliant as a lily stem, is clasped with a dainty bracelet in loving embrace, just where the dimpled wrist diminishes into the exquisitely molded hand. Her high brow, surmounting one of Lady Bulwer's inimitable noses, seems the pure tablet upon which a world of beautiful dreams are ready to record their pleasant histories twenty years from now, if we could read the page!

Carrying our glass toward the central aisle, we are arrested by a group of superb forms, robed in the most exquisite French taste, occupying the whole of a box in Oblivion Row. They are evidently a *comme il faut* party, carefully and expensively got up, and clearly altogether at home. They are not regular *habituées* of the Opera, and are well worth finding out. Let us enlighten you. That is the family of Monsieur le Comte de Clairville, who are here for a brief winter visit to one of our *real* aristocratic families, with whom they made acquaintance some time ago in Paris. You don't hear of these people at the New York Hotel, nor the Clarendon—and, beyond their own immediate circle, very few people in New York know anything of them. We will describe the young Vicomtesse de Clairville, such as we afterwards knew her—a sweet and perfect type of a real woman of rank and fashion—a model to be studied, a woman to be loved and adored. Her form had that appearance of absolute repose which nothing but full and vigorous life in relaxation possesses—for the sleep of death is rigorous, and stiff, and clammy, and the uneasy reclining of the invalid wearies rather than refreshes. The careless, unconscious abandonment to rest of a warm, rosy, palpitating form, flushed with the exuberance of a life it temporarily neglects to use, conveys to the mind the only sense of absolute repose.

The form of Madame de Clairville may well be selected as the type of both activity and rest. Round, plump, and elastic, as an infant's, she moves in buoyant undulations, like an embodied wave—the realization of the old Greek fable, Aphrodite rising from the sea. She is too dignified in her calm and somewhat disdainful mien to be called *petite*, and yet so infantile and graceful in her movements, that she inspires I know not what magnetic fascination, and an insane desire to rush toward her—to clasp her in your arms—to eat her, in short—and it is with difficulty that one highly susceptible to the fascination of grace and motion refrains from committing some mad indiscretion when this exquisite vision first beams upon him.

Should you undertake to make a *catalogue raisonné* of the Vicom-

tesse de Clairville's charms, you would not arrive at any very apparent brilliant result. A soft and changeable rosy light spreads all over her face, and envelopes her in an atmosphere that makes all beautiful. It is the *presence* that enthralls you, and you never dream of the sacrilege of analysing in detail the features of this youthful pythoness, who floats before you in a mysterious cloud, prophesying of joy and hope, and love. But the glance of her calm, steady, liquid eye, blue and unfathomable as the ocean, condenses this wavering cloud of radiance, and transfixes you with its resistless spell. It sends electric fire through the heart, illuminating the memory, making the harp of life vibrate with sweet and unknown music. The mystery of life and love in that glance—latent to all the world—to be revealed, perhaps, in all its wild and thrilling earnestness, never to one on earth.

I know not that I have at all succeeded in imparting any effective idea of this extraordinary being, or of explaining the resistless power she exercises over all whom she chooses to influence. She relies on no gorgeous dress to produce—all is as exquisitely simple as a Shakspeare sonnet. The stupid and the commonplace pass her by as the Indians so long passed by the priceless golden sands of the Pacific, until knowledge and appreciation saw and seized them with thirsting avidity. The secret of her power is in that latent grace I have attempted to describe—the power of the hidden magnetic currents in the loadstone, of the lightning buried in its cloud. She is like some magic flower, which opens by being gazed upon, and expands into immortal beauty beneath those eyes worthy to take in and understand her. She is the sapphire-pictured goblet of the orientals, in which the beholder sees all that his heart and soul are capable of drinking in. There is no standard by which to measure her: she rises with the occasion to a supernatural height. Fancy, imagination, genius—they are her playthings; and if she looks not with disdain upon those who pride themselves upon the possession of these gifts, it is because her nature cannot be for an instant anything but magnanimous. Her mental organization approaches prophecy nearer than genius. She is not a poet—she is the muse of inspiration itself.

This bewildering creature leans lightly against the seat in the further corner of the box. A rose-colored dress, cut plain and close, reveals the outlines of her form against the dark maroon velvet of the couch; and just where the horizon of the rosy robe mingles with the velvet gloom of the sofa, lies the most piquant foot and ankle, encased in a delicately-fashioned gaiter, rose-colored, and of the same material as the dress.

But we have lingered too long beneath this delicious spell. Let us resume our journey round the house.

Our glass is arrested at this moment by a most substantial-looking member of the opera aristocracy, who, with his wife and wife's sister, has come to enjoy the soothing influence of music—of which he is extravagantly fond—after the severe labors of the day, buying and selling imaginary cargoes of flour on 'Change, and realizing his shilling per barrel with no other trouble than making a bargain. However, he is now rich, and plays his part among the aristocracy with a skill and grace becoming his station. Amid all his innumerable and responsible avocations, as a merchant prince, he finds opportunities during the day of being pretty constantly engaged in a series of the most interesting personal and philosophical experiments. One of his favorite recreations is to come up softly behind an acquaintance, stick his forefinger near his cheek, and then suddenly call out his name. The poor fellow of course turns round quickly, and runs his nose or cheek sharply against his friend's finger—which, you must see is exquisitely funny. Sometimes the wag pins a handkerchief to the coat-tail of one of his acquaintances, steals another's pocket-handkerchief, and drops bits of paper on the hat-brim of a third.

These arduous and exhausting tasks of course make our hero thoroughly worn out by the time he reaches home, and admirably predispose him for enjoying the *chefs d'œuvre* of Donizetti and Rossini. His wife cares nothing about music, however, and only goes to please the fastidious taste of her husband. She is a most excellent woman, and feels herself peculiarly fortunate, especially when contrasting her married state with that of her sister, now happily a widow.

The sister made a grand mistake in estimating the character of him she consented to call her lord. He was a decided swell—a fast man—cut a dash—and fairly dazzled her usually cool and excellent judgment. Soon after his marriage, however, his real character became too apparent. He rapidly sunk, step by step, down to the mere street loafer, and finally enlisted as a common soldier in the army, and went to Mexico, where he died. On receipt of the intelligence of his death, the respectable brother-in-law, who had been greatly scandalized at the fellow's doings, and esteemed as she deserved the excellent sister of his wife, could not forbear exclaiming: "Well, there's some good news from Mexico at last!"

Look in the balcony, just in front of the middle boxes, and you may see one of the most brilliant and astonishing results of quack medicine

ever yet recorded. The father of that excessively dandified and aristocratic youth, who holds his head as if he "smelt something," was a few years ago as poor as you or I. But in a lucky hour he invented the "Health Pills and Flummux Bitters." One of their most remarkable cures is before you. The young man, we doubt, has really worked himself up into the belief that the purifying effects of the health pill and flummux bitters have cleansed his blood of all plebeian taint, and that he is now actually a full-blooded aristocrat, descended from William the Conqueror and Pocahontas. The modest and decidedly beautiful woman beside him is his newly-married wife—and her at least he cannot prize too highly.

Yonder light-colored young man, with a soft lymphatic face, sprinkled with a flaxen moustache, with large hands and feet, ill fitting garments, and a gait almost as shambling as a Yankee pedlar's, is a *fair* specimen of the dry goods business. He is the brother of a distinguished auctioneer and a conspicuous politician, and is continually on the go, from box to box, and from sofa to sofa—squeezing in here and out there—treading on a gouty gentleman's toes, and deranging an old woman's head-dress as he bows an apology—always laughing, always confused, and always in hot water. If he would only keep quiet, nobody would know how intensely snobbish and vulgar he is, nor how deficient he is—up here, just over the eyes!

In the balcony, just underneath the box of the beautiful opera queen, sits our good-natured and fat friend, the prince of auctioneers, who is in raptures with Lorini, because he runs everything up so easily. If he only had such a voice, there is no limit to the prices he could get for the goods he sells at auction! He has evidently dined sumptuously, and is in that peculiar state of beatitude so well described by the phrase "laying off."

Perhaps among the most conspicuous objects in the house is that family in the box yonder, consisting of the mother and two or three daughters, all of whom, however, but one, are now married. The women are not beautiful, but are distinguished in their appearance, dressed in exquisite taste, and in a remarkably quiet style for our high-colored metropolis; and all bear a striking resemblance to each other in form and features, although the elder ones show a decided tendency to *embon-point*. They are undeniably the most pretentious, exclusive, and aristocratic family in the city. Their position originally was by no means an elevated one; but by the sheer force of perseverance, discretion, and industry, added to an unyielding pretension of manner, and a considerable degree of accomplishment and positive ability, they have succeeded

in establishing themselves as the acknowledged head of the ostentatious or gay class of the fashionable world. It must be confessed that some of their means and appliances are ludicrous enough to those who have taken the trouble to examine into the philosophy of society, or of those material distinctions and badges of title and position which are recognized as such in Europe. For instance, it was discovered that in the Old World the panels of aristocratic carriages are sometimes decorated with the coat of arms or device of their owners. Our fashionables, determined not to be behind the very best aristocracy going, have had a very beautiful picture painted on the side of their carriage by a distinguished artist, for which they paid fifty dollars in cash. It represents, as well as we can make it out, a moose trying to climb over a currant bush, supported by a utensil strongly resembling a cooper's adze, while the quarterings are filled with ducal strawberries, which, by some error of the artist, look very much like thimbles. It appears also that somebody has informed them that English coachmen, footmen, &c., always wear livery; accordingly they have enveloped their driver in an immense drab surtout with six capes and brass buttons as big as breakfast plates. This coat he never puts off in public, either in summer or winter. Around his hat is a broad red band, carefully preserved from season to season, and regularly transferred from the old tile to the new. This portentous costume, comfortable enough certainly in cold weather, is as inconvenient in summer to its sweltering owner as it is at all times laughable and ridiculous. But it is *livery*. The Browns are aristocrats. Aristocrats clothe their coachmen in livery. Therefore the poor devil of a driver must sweat and swelter from June to September in this preposterous woollen casing, more horrible to endure and infinitely less elegant than the celebrated shirt of Nessus.

The history of the families who founded the noble house to whose members we are now paying our respects is a real romance. Of the fathers, one was a tailor, and for a number of years kept a little slop-shop and clothing store for sailors in a side street down town. The other was a worthy and respectable cooper, who made the neighborhood merry with his noisy hammering, which, from his natural fondness for music and the opera, arranged itself involuntarily into true musical rhythm. He did not, however, prosper in this world's goods so well as his friend and neighbor the tailor—people appearing to be more in want of breeches than barrels. He determined, therefore, to co-operate with his neighbor, and accordingly formed a copartnership with him in the tailoring business, whence large profits and cabbages had begun to flow and grow.

Both being men of great shrewdness, tact, and economy, and worshipping money as the one only true god, their gains rapidly accumulated, and were permanently invested in real estate. This of course increased in value with the growth of the city, until in a few years the partners found themselves millionaires, and their children, who had intermarried, and formed other eligible associations, were ready to assume the front rank as members of the aristocracy—a position which they seem determined to make the most of; and all the ladies say they are very nice and worthy people.

In process of time, one of the old gentlemen died, leaving, as was contended, a will devolving the great bulk of the estate upon the eldest children, and cutting off the younger brothers and sisters with a paltry annuity. Attempts have been made by the younger children to break the will, and divide the property equally among all the heirs; but, after long, exhausting, and protracted litigations, in which the poor plaintiffs were illy prepared to play their parts, they still remain unsuccessful, and it is more than probable that the final decision of the courts will confirm the present holders in their possessions, upon which they now flourish so extensively at the Opera and elsewhere among the fashionable world—thus virtually annulling the provision in our Constitution against the law of primogeniture, and enforcing, in effect, the hateful right of entail.

But, if the lucky children of this family have succeeded in keeping possession of all the money, the younger branches have enjoyed a full share of the romance. One of the younger brothers, having a great fondness for music and the arts, and being especially devoted to the drama, became greatly smitten at an early age with the charms and graces of a young actress, the daughter of a distinguished family of artists, and who, born and bred on the stage of the old Park Theatre, had made a brilliant and successful debut in her profession, and was universally booked in public estimation for an unlimited and splendid success. However, the little god tipped his dart, and with a twang away it flew into the susceptible heart of the young actress, who, dazzled by the aristocratic name and devoted attentions of her lover, formed the determination of resigning abruptly her just commenced and brilliant public career, and retiring to the elegant privacy of domestic life. When the young gentleman's penchant was made known to his aristocratic family, they greeted it with a groan of horror and a fierce cry of indignation. What! a son of the Browns, whose father mended breeches, to marry an actress, whose family only bawled Shakspeare? Why, 'twas enormous, 'twas a humiliation, a dis-

grace, a degradation, an odium that would for ever rest upon the very name of Brown, and which could only be contemplated with horror. However, finding that the young lover did not participate in these sentiments, and that, although of a mild and yielding disposition, he adhered stoutly and manfully to the dictates of his heart and the teachings of his affection, they tried the force of threats and denunciations—swore they would excommunicate him from the family, would never tolerate nor recognize his wife, nor permit him again to claim companionship or protection from them. But it was all in vain. The infatuated young man chose rather the love and devotion of the woman of genius and the artist who had enthralled him, than the heartless favor and hollow affection of his selfish and hard-hearted relatives.

The best part of the joke, however, was, that the mother of our actress, herself also an actress, and a distinguished ornament of the stage for many years, took the thing quite as hardly as her indignant friends, the Browns. Upon being informed of her daughter's engagement, she indignantly refused her consent to any such ignoble alliance for her gifted and brilliant daughter, exclaimed against the vulgar aspirations of these shopkeeping aristocracy, and even went so far as to call upon the mother of our hero in high state and full feather, and warn her by all the fears of an outraged mother's vengeance, to keep her son at home, and prevent the consummation of so disgraceful an intermingling of the blood of genius and talent with the base-born muddy current oozing from a tailor's cabbage patch. It was all in vain. The lovers sighed and laughed by turns, and, at length taking advantage of that freedom which is secured to every son and daughter of Adam by our glorious Constitution, fairly gave their indignant mamas the slip, and entered into the silken noose of Hymen. Nor, we faithfully believe, have they ever for one moment repented their determination; although the step they took has alienated them effectually from their friends, and cut off the one from that social position to which he was entitled, and stopped the other in her brilliant and ambitious career, yet are they apparently richly compensated for all in the continued and unswerving devotion and affection they feel and act toward each other. Their lives are a practical and beautiful abnegation of the old and slanderous line—

“The course of true love never did run smooth.”

It is true, I have sometimes, while watching the calm, impassive face of the lady, thought I could perceive, in the depths of her serenity and the abstraction of her manner, traces of smothered aspirations and scarce con-

quered regrets for the flattering position she had lost and the glorious career she had abandoned; but upon looking again I have become satisfied that such ideas originated in my own imagination, and were not shared by her. It is a case as remarkable as it is romantic and interesting; and were its details fully recited and drawn up by the pen of the novelist, it would create one of the most splendid works of fiction, founded upon life and reality, extant in our literature.

Until the last season, conspicuous among the conspicuous—seated year after year in the same sofa—always “going in” for five year subscriptions and half dollar allowances—and always, whether rain or shine, in their places, reposed in conscious dignity, the head and branches of another of our “first families.” The hope and heir of the house is a juvenile, but exceedingly characteristic specimen of the animal known in fashionable phraseology as a “duck.” He is a lathy, lanky, cadaverous-looking, young man, whom incessant attempts to smoke segars that made him sea-sick, and gulp down whisky-skins that turned his stomach, have bleached to the faintest and most woe-begone shadow of fresh and vigorous youth. The internal soil of his brain—not very deep nor rich at best, and entirely exhausted by the heavy crop of hempen it has been called upon to produce, has long since refused to grow the first blade of an idea; and the consequence is, lack-lustre expression of the dissipated eyes, and a flabbiness of the nerveless mouth, truly pitiable to behold. This poor youth, whom we use as the type of a large and disgusting class, the riches of whose whole lives are squandered ere they have yet crossed the threshold, is an object rather of commiseration than ridicule, and, were it not for the necessity of making an example for the benefit of the race, we would let him pass in silence.

The costume of one of these young sprouts of our soss aristocracy would of itself sufficiently indicate the idealess chaos of the owner's brain. Buried to the ears in a standing shirt collar, his little round head rests in a gigantic Joinville bow, like the top of a footman's carriage tassel. His thin legs are inserted in a pair of pantaloons, whose waistband is so low, and whose fit so vulgar, that one undergoes a constant premonitory disgust lest they should slip off. His coat is of the nattiest and tightest London flashman cut, and his gloves, with his vulgar hands stuffed into them, look like two bunches of white kid sausages. But to form a complete idea of his costume, you should see him in Broadway, with that straight English sack, the bag sleeves hanging below the tips of his fingers—his head supporting a pyramid chimney-pot hat, and his toes turned in as he walks, like those of a wild Indian on a trail. Under

his arm he carries a little yellow cane, with the head made in the likeness of a horse's hoof and foreleg in ivory, stuck in the side pocket of his coat. Thus tricked out, he is a sight to behold; and wherever he appears, a smile of quiet contempt and a sympathetic shrug of pity passes round the circle. However, his sublime self-complacency is an abundant shield for that and all the other rebuffs to which he is liable; and, beside, he is well received by the ladies, young and old, everywhere. The old gentleman has money. Q. E. D.

The old gentleman evidently enjoys, to the full capacity of his nature, the *otium cum dignitate* of his wealth and position. But a few years ago this liberal, enlightened, and worthy citizen was a small dealer in dead hogs, which he used to buy in the carcass, and cut up at his own door, while his prudent helpmate was carrying on a cheap boarding-house upstairs. By prudence, industry and economy, the gains of pork and sausages accumulated year after year, until the huckster became the wholesale dealer and adventurous speculator, while the boarding-house expanded into the aristocratic mansion "above Bleeker"—the rolling-pin was exchanged for the piano, and magnificent weekly entertainments almost made the whole family forget that all their greatness is derived from a long line of illustrious dead hogs.

We trust that no one will so far mistake us as to imagine for a moment that we mean to cast contempt upon the humble origin of the New York aristocracy. Far from it. None has a more appreciative admiration of the industry by which these individuals have risen from the obscurity of the bench and the shop-board to the lofty positions they occupy on the sofas of the Opera House, than ourselves. But as it is evident that a real aristocracy is about crystallizing, we have accepted, in the absence of a regular Herald's College, the task of collecting and preserving, in a durable form, the "antecedents" of the illustrious individuals who compose it. In discharging this duty, we are guided alone by accuracy and impartiality; and should we inadvertently make any mistakes or omissions, we shall be very glad to correct them in our next edition, upon a proper presentation of the facts.

The family to whom we have been paying our respects stands deservedly high among the members of our Astor-ocracy, and its distinguished head is as remarkable for the goodness of his heart as the badness of his orthoëpy. His use of money is as judicious as his use of words is unfortunate. To look at the appointments of his house and family, you would conclude that he was a man of distinguished taste—to hear him speak, you would inevitably take him for a fool. The truth, however, is,

that he is neither one nor the other. Had he attended to the lining of his head as assiduously as that of his pocket, he might have been a *savan*; but the golden texture of riches, unlike the Schneiderian membrane, is sufficient for only one cavity at once.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OPERA, CONTINUED—AN EDITOR AND HIS WIFE—A LITTLE SCANDAL
—CATALOGUE RAISONNEE OF FASHIONABLE SOCIETY—REFLECTIONS.

Do you see in that back private box, of the second tier, a magnificently dressed woman seated beside a tall, silver gray-headed gentleman, with a dignified quiet air, and a very conspicuous squint? A young gentleman, embedded in moustache and whisker, is behind them, scanning the house through his glass, and occasionally saying a word or two to the lady, who replies with a haughty and indifferent air. These two people first mentioned are worth our especial attention.

When a man of mere wit or talent, who has forced his way from obscurity to celebrity or notoriety—and, in good truth, the terms are, now-a-days, synonymous—by the force of what he has said or written, and not of what he has bought and sold, he deserves a passing notice at our hand. The “antecedents,” as well as the present surroundings and belongings of such a man, cannot fail to be interesting. In this world, and especially in this city, every pretension to distinction of any kind is supposed, of course, to originate from the money-bag, and is strictly measured by the yard-stick. Beyond the counting-house and the broker’s den there can be nothing enviable, nothing worth exploring. The world has but one gate, and that is a golden one. Its cards of ceremony are drafts and acceptances, its invitations are bank bills. Whoever enters into this charmed circle, except in the “regular way,” must have had about the tallest job at climbing that has been recorded since David Crockett found himself up a girdled tree. Even then, the fight is by no means over, but must be prolonged inch by inch and step by step. It is perfectly natural that those in possession should look scowlingly upon the clandestine interlopers, and should watch their opportunity for unceremoniously ejecting them.

The persons now under the focus of our lens are conspicuous specimens of what we have been saying. In the face of the united jeers and clamor of snobdom itself, and the curses and envious denunciations of his

cotemporaries, here is an editor who, having set his ambition firmly upon one point, of attaining, through his influence as a journalist, social distinction for himself and his family, has patiently persevered, amid such obstacles as must have dismayed, crushed, and overwhelmed any but a man of iron nerve and indomitable perseverance. Yet we must admit that he has succeeded; and we say this, not from any love for the subject of our sketch, but from a devilish and malicious pleasure we feel in cramming this bitter truth down the throats of the vain, shallow, ignorant, and insolent upstarts who presume to set themselves up as the standards of "good society" and the dispensers of its worthless favors. Yes—we repeat it to you, messieurs rag-sellers and stock-gamblers, booby children of lucky tailors and coopers, hatters and sausage-makers, who swell and dash, and rattle about as if the world were made for you alone, that this gaunt and solemn-looking scribbler has more influence in the wave of his goose-quill than your whole tribe put together. His wife, too, spends more money than you dare ask of your stingy husbands—wears richer dresses and more expensive jewelry—cuts a greater dash altogether, attracts ten times the sum of that *éclat* and attention, for which you are all dying, than any of you ever dared aspire to.

This scribbler, too, and his saucy wife, have been abroad and visited the leading cities of Europe—and they have been received with distinguished honor at ambassadorial dinners, ministerial *soirées*, and even royal levées themselves. And no longer ago than the past winter, they visited the beautiful and aristocratic queen of the Western Archipelago; where they were received by the haughtiest and most exclusive race of aristocrats of this breathing world, with little less than royal honors and attentions. *Fêtes* and festivals signalized their coming; and their whole stay in this delightful region was one uninterrupted and joyous jubilee. Yes, my dear Mrs. Bobus, with the immense Spanish fan, which you do not know how to even open properly, and the big bouquet, almost as red and vulgar as your own face—this mere editor and his wife have been received and courted in circles where you and your money, and your "family influence," and all the introductions and bills of credit which your husbands could cram into their portfolios, would not receive even the courtesy of a look—would, in fact, never penetrate beyond the porter's lodge, or the ante-room. This we assure you of, oh, Bobus, for your especial comfort and gratification—not our own. You may laugh, and sneer, and wriggle, and teeter about on your patent-spring upholstery as much as you please, but you cannot alter this fact. The scribbler, the journalist, the editor whom nobody knows, and the stylish equipage of

whose Di Vernon-ish wife you affect to ignore in Broadway, is the master of you all, and his pen is the scourge with which he drives you all before him. Your husbands cower in their caves at the reverberations of his patent-revolving press, and tremble in their boots if he but glance his not very tender eyes toward them. Bank-stock and insurance-office swindlers, who live in lordly luxury by systematic frauds that would disgrace the club-houses of old Park Row, go about in constant dread of him, and pay adulation, and go down on their knees, and even write checks in his favor—begging, like poor Faust, for a little “time” before being brought to a settlement of their accounts with society. So that our once poor and despised scribbler, who lived up four pair of stairs in a back attic (which was just three pair more of stairs than he possessed of breeches) and dined humbly on cheese and garlic, is now, in very truth, the autocrat of all your “good society” and “exclusive” sets, and “first families.” Ha! ha! ha! We can’t help laughing, Messieurs Bobus and Company, at such a good joke—although perhaps you don’t see the point of it!

But the funniest part of the business is that the cotemporaries of this man and his paper, all affect the utmost horror of him, and denounce him on every occasion as a monster, an ogre, and for aught we know, a ghoul, who preys upon the dead carcasses of newspapers that have died in his time (and it must be confessed that the times have been rather sickly for several years’ past!) and yet there is not one of these editors who does not practice on a small and mean scale the very things our “satanic” friend is charged with on a grand and satanic scale. Let an artist, a painter, a musician, or actor of the most unquestioned genius, come to New York, and not patronize the ———, for instance, do you think the ——— would applaud his performances? Let a reformer appear, advocating the same doctrines, and exposing the same abuses upon which that paper gains its notoriety and profits, should he not happen to belong to the editor’s personal clique of adherents and toadies, the ——— would never condescend to hear of his existence. Take a new invention in science or mechanics to the editor for his examination, and you will be sent to the desk to arrange with the advertising clerk for a notice. Carry to the office an article stating in express terms that Snooks’ renovating hair dye absolutely possesses the power of filling a mattress-tick with first-rate curled hair by a single application, and besides is a certain specific for fleas, the corns and fever-and-ague, and you can have it published EDITORIALLY, without any qualification or reservation whatever—for *two shillings a line*! And so of monied insti-

tutions, rat-traps and quack medicines, kickshaws and theology—that which *pays* is *puffed*; that which *don't* pay is either denounced or treated with silence. And this is by no means true of one paper alone, but of nearly every newspaper in the city of New York. The principle, the *only* principle, upon which journalism is conducted at the present moment in New York, from the “responsible” editor to the penny-a-line picker-up of horrible accidents, and the water-rat of the police office, is that of *pay* for services rendered. And the Great Horned Devil, who is the patron saint and tutelary divinity of editors and the press generally, laughs and chuckles in his sleeve, when he sees these sly and cunning artful dodgers quietly picking the pockets of the community, while raising the hue and cry against the magnanimous Dick Turpin of the profession.

But we beg your pardon, handsome and witty madam; your husband's affairs have detained us too long, and the curtain is absolutely rising. Yes, we accept your charming invitation to that *petite souper*; and meanwhile, *Signora mia, baccio la mano, e reverderci!*

We are now going to indulge you, gentle reader, in a little genuine scandal, at the expense of our comfortable-looking friend over yonder, the Chinese Mandarin. We won't be ill-natured, however, and therefore we guess there will be nobody hurt.

The gentleman whom we have at this moment under inspection, commenced life humbly—very humbly—so much so, in fact, that the muse refuses to trace the stream of his pedigree to its source. By some lucky chance, or rather the promptings of the instinct of money-making, at an early part of his career he stumbled into the china business, which in a few years began to turn everything within its influence to gold, and he now, at full mid age, supports an elegant establishment, and makes all the necessary motions to pass himself off as a real first rate nabob.* His domestic history is a curious one.

Some years ago he engaged himself to a young lady of New York—whom, however, upon reconsidering matters, when the time came round to fulfill his contract, he concluded to abandon; and, being a man of strict business habits and undoubted mercantile honor, he commenced a formal negotiation for this purpose. With the details of the transaction we are not familiar; but the result of it was such as to do credit to his liberality and business tact. The young lady with the broken heart,

* Rumor says that he went to China with some two hundred thousand dollars, made in South America, and returned from the Celestial Empire with sixteen hundred thousand dollars in specie—no more—no less.

received the handsome sum of \$60,000, cash in hand, in lieu of the hand of her expected bridegroom, and in consideration of which she relinquished all right and title in and to the said bridegroom.

What became of the deserted fair one with the sixty thousand charms, we do not know—but we presume that, if she still felt herself matrimonially inclined, she found no difficulty in attracting and fixing scores of devoted admirers from which to choose. At any rate, if *we* were in the market, and a sixty thousand dollar lure should come gliding down the stream of life, we think we could tell of an old trout who would leap from his hiding-place, willing to be caught.

Our nabob mandarin, after doing up this little speculation in fancy matrimonial securities, immediately cast about for another venture in the same line, and at last paid a business visit to Massachusetts, and made a “dicker” with one of its wooden nutmeg-making, clock-peddling fathers, for the hand and person of the lady who is now his wife. They live in the perfection of parvenu style and fashion—that is, they do every thing exactly as the French waiting-maid and the upholsterer prescribe. They go to the opera, because among the set to which they wish to belong, it appeared to be fashionable to do so. The lady may have the fashionable amount of musical education; but as for the gentleman, his judgment of the various chops of tea is far superior to his opinion of the relative merit of different operas or artists.

He and his *carâ sposa* appear to live very comfortably as times go. The lady is a “highflier” in her notions of matters and things, and goes in for cutting a big swell as she dashes along. She has plenty of admirers, gives magnificent entertainments, and does in all respects exactly as she pleases—the only paradisal state of existence to a woman. She knows the price she paid for all these beatitudes, and as *it wasn't love*, she don't consider them too dear. After all, if we look closely into the private histories which go to make up the aggregate of society, we shall see the general truth broadly inculcated, that woman is strictly an article of merchandise. Who, then, shall blame her for getting the highest price she can for her charms and her attractions?

The mystery of it is, to the outsiders, how such people as these continue to be recognized as the “aristocracy” of this refined metropolis, and to assist in giving tone and character to American society. But to those who have any just idea of the power of money as the representative of *things*, and the utter superfluity of *ideas*, the explanation is easy enough. These brainless clods, these heartless flirts, these stingy shopkeepers, have made *money*; and with that they can buy any kind of distinction,

social, literary, or political. There is a kind of vague, indistinct consciousness among these people, that they are troubled with a lack of brains, and could not but appear ridiculous in the presence of persons with the slightest pretensions to intellect. Hence their studious neglect of literary men and women, and the pains they take to surround themselves with such expensive accessories and time-consuming ceremonies, as make a person of moderate earnings feel uncomfortably out of place the moment he finds himself among them. A moderate sized family cannot expect to go, as it is called, "decently" into society in New York short of ten thousand dollars a year; and few who make their money honestly have anything like that income. The consequence is, that "aristocratic" society is principally made up of brainless spendthrifts, unprincipled gamblers, and heartless flirts. This is a hard thing to say—but the worst of it is, that it is true.

If you will take the altitude of that rouguish-looking gentleman, seated between two over-dressed daughters, we will relate to you, in a few words, a history that might answer, with here and there an alteration, for three-quarters of the shop-keeping "aristocracy" of this beautiful metropolis.

The gentleman is the son of the skipper of an old Albany packet-schooner—a sort of vessel greatly resembling, in its day and generation, the "chicken thieves" that ply up and down "the coast" to and from New Orleans; but it has long since passed out of knowledge. Our hero not having any particular penchant for the sea, nor even being much delighted with the charming scenery of the Hudson, declined the hereditary schooner, and commenced life by making fires and running of errands for a broker's office. He remained brokering for some years, and then made a venture to South America, whence he returned with some money and considerable knowledge of the world, as exhibited in those distant and enlightened regions.

After his return, he cast about for the quickest and safest way of turning his money, and at last went into the flour business. He was, however, unlucky, and found that the staff of life would not afford him an adequate support. He therefore backed out from that, and in 1833, in company with another speculator, went into the stock-brokerage business. Here the golden goddess again smiled upon him, and for a time the concern went on swimmingly. After awhile he and his partner dissolved the union, and our hero went on alone, with variable success, until 1838, when he smashed up completely, and gave his notes in settlement—some of which, by the way, were not paid till last cholera

summer. Perhaps the cholera acted sympathetically upon his conscience.

Somewhere about 1842, our friend struck up an acquaintance with the cashier of the — Life and Trust Company, who furnished him with funds to go into a large speculation in State Stocks—buying at 53, and in a short time having the gratification to see them run up to par. The result of this speculation was, a clear profit of about one hundred thousand dollars—or fifty thousand for our hero, and the same for his friend the cashier. The latter thereupon resigned his office, and both went into partnership together, and commenced an extensive and profitable business.

Heretofore our hero had been simply a business man—a money-making man. Now, however, the latent buds of his ambition, warmed into life by the genial spring of wealth, burst into full bloom, and our drudge became suddenly transformed into the aristocrat—came the big figure in a tip-top residence in a fashionable street, dressed his family to death, set up a carriage, with a driver more than his master's equal in birth, breeding, heart and intellect, and finally reached the summit of his ambition, and a sofa at the Opera House, at one and the same time. He knows as much of music as his friend the New York Mandarin, or his neighbor the fat auctioneer; however, he and his daughter seem to enjoy the scene to the full. The ladies, although, as we have said, somewhat over-dressed, are decidedly handsome, and evidently good-natured and amiable. They are at least as refined and well-bred as most of their neighbors, and altogether show off as very flattering samples of upper-crustitude.

But if the daughters are distinguished for their amiability, the father is as notorious for the hardness of his character. No man in the street bears down more heavily upon new-beginners and men of small means, struggling on the meager common where once he was, than our purse-proud and clay-hearted aristocrat. Indeed, next to increasing his own gains, it is probable that his dearest pleasure in life is to see the hopes of others disappointed.

There, perhaps, is the biggest dandy in the house—at least he thinks he is, and that amounts to the same thing. People pass pretty much at their own valuation—unless it is *too* high, and then they are "bogus," and won't go at all. The history of that gentleman, who seems to know everybody, who is well received and goes everywhere, is an interesting and instructive chapter of human nature. He came at a very early but not very tender age from the country, and got a place in a small retail

dry-goods store in Maiden Lane. He was, however, so excessively awkward and shy in his manners that he became a real nuisance to the customers; and his employer, although he found his new clerk honest and faithful, yet began to feel that he must either mend his manners or cut his stick. Through the friendly instructions and advice of another clerk, however, our hero gradually shed the "exuvix of the clown," as our friend Patrick Henry—or maybe it was William Wirt—somewhere so aptly says; and in process of time the rude and boorish country bumpkin refined his common mind to more porcelain consistence, and acquired, in the end, all the extra polish of fashionable life and good society.

After our hero had grown to be a bearded man, and had gone successfully into business with the fellow-clerk who had formerly taken his part, and, as it were, licked him into shape, he paid a visit one summer to a fashionable watering-place, to get a glimpse of good society in undress, and make some observations necessary to perfect his knowledge of the manners and usages of the great world. Here he fell in, accidentally, with a rich banker and capitalist, from one of the river towns, who had accompanied an invalid daughter to the springs in the hope of restoring her to health. Our hero at once paid the most assiduous court to the family; and, by the closeness and unremittingness of his attentions, at length fairly won the heart of both father and daughter. The affair ended in a proposal of marriage, which, although regarded favorably by the young lady as well as her father, raised such a clamor from the friends and relations against the obscurity and poverty of the wooer, that the affair was postponed, though not abandoned. Suffice it to say that, as usual, true love and shrewd calculation got the advantage of all opposing obstacles, and they were finally married.

The business of our hero and his partner had been uniformly prosperous, and they were gradually increasing their means and laying the foundation of influence and wealth. During one of the great commercial crises, however, which swept over the country a few years ago, the house fell with the crash, and our hero found every dollar remorselessly swept away. After things had subsided a little, his father-in-law advanced him twenty thousand dollars, with which he recommenced business on his own account, and in a short time began to make headway again. Gradually the old gentleman gave up, too, the management of his own affairs into the hands of his active and energetic son-in-law; until, finally, the young man found himself virtually the head of one of the most popular banks in the State, and the controlling spirit of an immense and widely-ramified business.

His natural instincts for society now claimed a hearing, and our hero soon began to make his appearance in the wealthiest and most aristocratic circles of metropolitan society. At the Opera, of course, he was "bound to shine;" and you may see him, on any regular evening, as he is now, going about with an air of perfect self-assurance, and appearing to be on the same comfortable terms with himself as with everybody else. He is always, however, alone, and his wife is never seen in society at all—preferring the domestic quietude of "private life" to the gaudy tinsel of fashion and its attending follies. If she is as happy as the husband evidently is, they may truly be called a favored household.

But we have exhausted our evening, though by no means our material. Yet we shall return here no more. What we have seen and described as represented in the faithful daguerreotype of our achromatic voigtlander lorgnette will serve admirably as an illustration of the entire classes that have passed over our field of vision; and from a consideration of what we have here presented, may be gathered a correct idea of the most pretentious class of the aristocracy of New York. It is true, that beyond the walls of the Opera House, and the gaudy circle where our parvenues and snobs play their ludicrous pranks, there are circles of society where a true, well-bred, and unpretending aristocracy, possessing but not boasting the distinction of elegance, refinement, blood and education, holds its unpretending reign. But, of the few families who compose these circles, little is ever seen or heard in public. By never attempting to interfere with the rights of others, nor to monopolize the distinctions and privileges of society, they have never made themselves obnoxious to the strictures of even cynics and philosophers, and are justly entitled to escape all censorious comments. There are some of them, the remaining families of the wealthy Knickerbockers, who first settled in these regions, and whose blood has flowed in a pure and uninterrupted stream for many generations. Seldom distinguished for genius, unusual talent, or a vigorous ambition, they are quite free from all imputations of meanness, avarice, and insolence, and their history forms a clear, pure, but stagnant, level, like the waters of some sequestered lake, remote from haunts of bustling men, whose virgin waves are unviolated by the prows of eager travel or grasping trade, and whose green solitudes are undisturbed by the disenchanting scream of 'scape valve or steam whistle. They are, in truth, the conservative element of the condition of society in the New World, and, like everything else conservative, are slowly but inevitably disappearing and sinking to an utter annihilation. In a few generations more, these remnants and relics of

the past will be entirely absorbed and transmuted, and then we shall rush onward in the great and magnificent experiment of seeing how society can get along without any conservative elements whatever. Already are the names of these old families we have mentioned become like shadows to our apprehension. Many will hasten to extinction even in the present generation; while the inevitable and irresistible decay of all the race is as palpable as the fading of the Red man from hill and plain. Although, strictly scanned, the members of these families would individually betray a remarkable decrepitude and degeneracy of character, inseparable from the physiological conditions of their existence on this continent, yet we never see one of them nor hear the name mentioned without an involuntary tribute of respect to these crumbling relics of a decayed and dying social feudalism, the like of which can never again exist on this free earth.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRESS—ITS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

THE Press! Mighty power! Miraculous engine! Irresistible impulse—electric thrill, that keeps the pulse of the world throbbing, and beats to the brains remotest convolutions—which clarifies the moral atmosphere, and keeps it from petrification and decay. How shall I approach thee? for, although from earliest boyhood, bred among thy minions, disciples and devotees, now that I stand as it were beyond myself, and seek to scan all the interests of society with a just, impartial, and remorseless eye, I find myself in a strange predicament. Evenly balanced between the veneration which the ideal press inspires, and the knowledge that an experience of the actual imparts, I fear, on the one hand to do it more than honor, and on the other, less than justice. Indeed to one who has penetrated into the profounder depths of the arcana of journalism—to whom all the mechanism that moves this gigantic automaton is familiar, and whose fingers are within reach of the most secret stops and keys of this world-moving organ—the contrast between what it might be, and should be, and what it is, is little less than terrible, oppressing the soul with its material weight, and crushing the aspirations of progress and humanity, that are thus checked in their inmost temple by the divulgings of their most secret oracle. What the tripod of the Pythoness, the omens and oracles of the seers and sooth-sayers, the inspirations of the prophets, and the direct revelations from Heaven were to the earlier ages—what the two tables of stone given to Moses on Mount Horeb were to the patriarchal epoch of the race—the press ought to be to the men of this generation. What chivalry and knighthood were to the dark ages, the knights of the press should be to this—the defenders of the assailed, the protectors of the weak, the vindicators of the innocent, the terror of the oppressor, the scourge of the false, and the righter of the wronged. No institution, nor no power on earth, sacerdotal or secular, ever held so high a trust or ministered from so lofty an altar as the free press of the nineteenth century; and when I look at it as it is, scan one by one the materials of which it is com-

posed, and see how ludicrously inadequate are the means to the mighty end, I feel a disposition to retract my connection with it, to break off all intercourse with its oracles, and to denounce it as the giant imposition of the century—the false priest, and the dishonest monster that should be chased in disgrace from the temple.

But after all, I know that I am wrong. Although the press itself is a far higher and loftier institution than any other on earth, yet its members and ministers are and must be only men, and men too in the general, at the same points of development as those by whom they are surrounded, and with whom they live. Therefore, if the littlenesses and selfishnesses of those who control the press, appear monstrous and exaggerated, it is only because their position and their responsibilities are so much greater than those of other men that their slightest derilection assumes the aspect of a crime. Intrinsically and inherently, therefore, I do honestly believe that there is an equal amount of honor, integrity, intelligence and independence in the press, as in any other profession or calling among men. And in the comments which I am about to make on the leading members of this powerful body in this metropolis of the New World, I claim to be actuated by a desire to probe the monstrous corruptions and evils under which our noble profession suffers, not to gratify the remotest shadow of a personal feeling, or an envious hatred to those who have reached a higher point than myself in their journey through life. Among all men who create, either in literature or art, the present miserable and inverted system of rewards, both pecuniary and moral, produces an inevitable envy as the general law of their existence. But knowing this full well, and being every day disgusted by some contemptible illustration of this truth, I hope I have self-denial enough to sacrifice whatever of latent jealousy or envy of my cotemporaries may find lodgment in my heart, and to give expression only to those impulses of justice and ambition which are based upon the profession itself, and a careful and earnest study of its duties and responsibilities. Let us then, in pursuance with our sketchy plan of composition, in which, being amenable to no law of rhetoric or logic, we have freer scope for the utterance of all that presses upon us, call before us the principal individuals who sway those engines of public opinion—the newspapers—and whose voice can make or mar, save or damn, the greatest enterprises and the loftiest hopes.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRESS, CONTINUED—MAJOR NOAH—JOSEPH BARBER—JAMES WATSON WEBB—WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT—PARKE GODWIN.

THE whole of this, and the succeeding chapters, devoted to the Press, I have been obliged to re-write. They were first composed two years and a half ago. In that time how many changes have taken place! Some are dead—some appointed to foreign missions—some gone into the Custom House—some have married—some have taken to trade—some to drink—some have got rich—and almost all have changed places.

I had placed at the head of my catalogue, as being the patriarch of the press, the name of Major Noah, whom I had seen the very morning on which this chapter was written, fresh and buoyant, in all the exuberance of health and good nature, which made him so great a favorite with all. Now—he is no more. Still, I let his name stand in the place I originally assigned it. I let stand, too, the censure as well as the praise with which I remarked upon him. Whatever I then said, I honestly thought, and, therefore, I will not erase a syllable. Of course, had the work not been written until after his death, many modifications might have taken place; but now, all must stand. Major Noah was neither better nor worse than the great majority of mankind, and had been placed in a position which neither the profoundness of his ideas nor the brilliancy of his literary acquirements fairly warranted. But he was a genial, cordial man, in his personal relations, and from his long connection with the press and public affairs, his death was widely mourned.

Mordecai Manasseh Noah, formerly styled “King of the Jews,” in years gone by, and at the era of American journalism corresponding to the infancy of the institution, was considered the smartest and most permanent and popular of our editors. We remember well when he, after lying *perdu* for a certain time, broke out freshly upon the admiration of the public with the “Evening Star,” a paper that in its day enjoyed an unbounded popularity and a large circulation, and made no small

degree of noise. Major Noah, in his best days,—and these were his best days,—was a rather sparkling writer, altogether superficial in his ideas, but quick in apprehension, ready in words, and keen-sighted to perceive the weak points of his enemy, and to send his shaft of ridicule or satire, winged with his grey goose quill, right to its centre. His paragraphs had a genial tone, and he always adroitly managed to conceal the malevolence (if malevolence there were) of his attacks beneath an air of good-nature and candor, which quite took the hearts of his readers, and left his adversary altogether at his mercy. He was magnanimous, too, in his newspaper warfares, in one or another of which he was perpetually engaged, and not only came off victor, but uniformly received great praise for his forbearance, and applause for what he had not done. He had a quick eye for external nature, and especially for the goings on of city life; and whatever subject he touched, he was sure to render interesting, either by happy local allusions, and witty embellishment, or now and then, even by some sprinkle of fancy or beam of imagination. Of these higher elements, however, his possessions were limited, and it is very seldom that traces of the true poetical temperament can be detected. His writings are an indication of his real character. He was an excellent companion, an agreeable acquaintance, a good liver, a man always ready to do you a favor, provided it did not cost him too much, and who had rather live on good terms with everybody, excepting, of course, professionally, than to take the trouble and risk of contention. Sometimes, in the earlier part of his life, his heart even got the better of his senses, and his benevolence led him to do things of which the advantage was entirely against himself. As a general rule, he kept both eyes upon the main chance, and took very few steps and made very few motions with his thumb and fingers without some special object of self-emolument. For this, as times go, we have, of course, no right to condemn him. He was, at least, no worse than many others of his profession in this respect, while he was, doubtless, a good deal better than some of them.

The political career of Major Noah was a fruitful and instructive one. There are few phases of partisanship he did not test, few systems of policy he did not both advocate and oppose, and few great questions of national interest with all sides of which he was not familiar. To one thing in politics he was ever constant—his own aggrandizement; and with that remarkable faculty of convincing himself of his own incorruptibility, which is the corner-stone of all political prosperity to the individual, he managed so to trim, and stretch, and patch, and refashion that old antiquated garment called political conscience, as to adapt it exactly to his

own needs and his own necessities. He was a warm advocate, and almost the exclusive organ of Tyler and Tylerism; and having been placed by that memorable patriot in a snug berth in the Custom House, with no services and a good salary, he managed to retain it up to the hour of his death. His office was that of a secret inspector—salary \$1500 a year, prerequisites as much more, and pickings and stealings to any reasonable extent. His duty was to take a walk once a month up the East River, and see that the pier-heads of the wharves were all in their proper places, and that the rats had not run away with the underpinning of the Dry Dock. When his Tyler organ, the "Union," followed its prototype into the hades of oblivion, the Major was for some time unknown to the journalistic world; but he soon reappeared as editor of "Noah's Sunday Messenger;" which, after losing as much money as the Major cared about taking out of his own pocket, was united with the "Sunday Times," and still continues to be published under the latter appellation. To this sheet, of which the Major continued the responsible editor while he lived, he has imparted a higher tone than had before characterized the Sunday press; and its patronage and circulation are now large and among a very intelligent and respectable class of the community. His own personal labor on the paper was light, the editorial columns being filled with spicy paragraphs and racy editorials, by various practised pens, who are always well paid and well treated by the proprietors, Messrs. Deans and Howard. Some of these are capitally done, especially the good-natured burlesques, many of which are quite worthy of "Punch" himself.

Major Noah was also, *sub rosa*, editor of the "Morning Star," a penny paper of large circulation, but without any distinctive characteristics, except those of good-nature and industry, and which, after sinking about twenty thousand dollars to the proprietors, is now merged into a democratic journal, under the offices of Caspar Childs, the coroner of New York newspapers.

The "Sunday Times" is now edited by one of the finest and choicest writers belonging to the world of New York journalism—Joseph Barber, who, with wit and talent enough for a new Elia, is forced, by the meagre pay awarded to both these qualities, to expend his time and energies in the more productive fields of puff-writing and other literary drudgery. It is pleasant, however, amid all the regret that such a perversion of good gifts inspires, to trace him in his better moments through the columns which he now and then so joyously embellishes.

But to return to Major Noah. The old king of Israel must have left

some distance behind the goal of those three score years and ten which the Psalmist appointed for the race of men ; yet, till a short time before his death, the old man's eye had lost none of its brightness, nor his cheek its color, nor his form its buoyant and dignified erectness. But the last time we saw him we were shocked at perceiving that he was almost blind, and that, led carefully in by the friend with whom he had come to dine one bright Sunday at the Union Place Hotel, his voice trembled as he accosted us, and his hand felt dry and scaly in our grasp. A few days later, we heard that he had been attacked by paralysis ; and again, after the lapse of a few more days, that he was slowly recovering. His powerful frame and iron constitution for a time still withstood the assaults of the remorseless enemy ; but already had the walls of the castle begun to reel beneath the blows of the assailant, and soon the citadel itself rendered itself up to the conqueror of the mighty. When he died, a wide chasm was left in the circle of relatives and friends nearest around him—for in all the attributes of husband, father, and citizen, no stain of reproach rests upon his name. Often have we seen him and his handsome young wife seated together at the theatre or concert-room, their faces glowing with that enthusiasm for art, and that appreciation of its lightest efforts, which form the distinguishing characteristics of their wondrous race, and their eyes glistening with that dew of sympathy which dries up in ordinary hearts ere the hair begins to silver or the brow to wrinkle. When we miss Major Noah from our frequent casual encounter in Nassau street, and meet no more, for month after month, the genial nod and kindly pressure, we feel that a patriarch of our profession has departed from us, and one who, if he did not fulfill all that might be exacted of him, at least escaped many of the vices and demoralizing corruptions by which he was surrounded, and successfully resisted temptations beneath which others might have succumbed. The funeral of Major Noah was a solemn festival of grief in New York.

Next in point of age, influence and importance, among our city journalists, is General James Watson Webb, a man who in his day and generation has exercised probably a more extended influence, for good as well as evil, upon the public opinion and public affairs of this country, than any other editor attached to the New York press. His personal and political history he has managed, by the help of his organization, to keep the public entirely familiar with. He cannot be a bad man, by nature, or he would have been more careful to conceal his tergiversations from the public. He is haughty, self-willed, violent when thwarted, and reckless of danger to himself or his position, and we fear unscrupulous in

his assaults upon his adversaries. Conscious of great intellectual force and moral power, he lacks those graces and that nice sense of the fitness of things, which are the only passports to personal respect and deference on the part of the public towards its conspicuous men. This galls and irritates him; and in the mortification of losing that for which his vanity impels him incessantly to seek, he commits and recommits the very excesses which absolutely prevent him from ever achieving it. He is too careless of the feelings of others ever to have his own respected, and too remorseless in his pursuit of a foe to receive the commiserations of the spectators when he himself happens to be worsted. As to political consistency, he has uniformly derided it. Parties and platforms he has set at naught, and sacrificed without a regret every public man who would not minister to his own purposes. The excuse for this is doubtless found by his own conscience, in that wide-spread selfishness, dishonesty, and corruption, that pervade political affairs, and from the stigma of which we know not the public man who has escaped. Indeed, the whole scheme of politics, as conducted in this Republic, sets a premium on rascality, and elevates above the heads of honest, modest and worthy men, the most worthless and unreliable elements of our society. Political success demands such an abnegation of all the higher qualities of the human heart, that none who possess them in an eminent degree will pay the price or make the sacrifice. The consequence is, that our offices and places of public trust and honor, are filled by the men least deserving the confidence and the respect of their fellow citizens. This is true of all times and all parties, but never more true than of the present times and the present parties in the American Republic. In pursuing, therefore, to their farthest results in the aggrandizement of the individual, the detestable doctrines that actuate parties and public men at this day, General Webb has but to lay the salvo to his bleeding conscience—"I am no worse than my fellows." But he who seeks in the depravity of others an excuse for himself, although he may escape the punishment due to crime, need never hope the respect we pay alone to virtue.

General Webb is a finely-framed martial-looking man; and now since his hair has become gray, strikingly indicates the doctrine of Lavater that every man resembles some peculiar tribe of animals. The family to which General Webb evidently belongs is the wolf species. He is eminently carnivorous and combative. He has great keenness of intellect, but is deficient in that discretion and common sense which are the highest endowments of the human brain. He has no appreciation of wit or fancy, and only delights in those growls and biting onsets which his wolf-

ish characteristics indicate. His journal, the "Courier and Enquirer," was once almost unlimited in its power, but the repeated indiscretions of its editorial conduct (not always attributable to General Webb himself), and the ferocity with which its political course has been characterized, had greatly loosened the foundations of its popularity, until it finally opened its columns to the treasonable and destructive spirit of abolitionism and anti-slavery, and almost at a blow came near tumbling from its lofty position. It was for some months no longer any other than a mere sectional and sectarian sheet, devoted to the advocacy of certain narrow principles and narrower men, whose success or prosperity can never be achieved but at the expense of the country and the Constitution. Alarmed at the unmistakable evidences of the loss of position furnished by the rapid decay of its subscription-list and advertising patronage, during his absence, General Webb hastened home from Europe, and has since endeavored to retrace its steps and regain the position it had lost. This work has been but partially successful—the "Courier and Enquirer" can scarcely hope to again exert its old political influence.

Age, genius, and reputation, being the three most valuable things on earth, we should not be excused for longer withholding our attentions from William Cullen Bryant, the chief of American poets, editor of the "Evening Post," and most popular literary man of the country next to Irving. Mr. Bryant, though he writes slowly and with great labor, and has a natural indisposition to produce—whenever he does produce, it is something worth the reading. Cool, polished, unimpeachable in style and tone, his prose is distinguished by a rare moderation of sentiment, perspicuity of expression, and gentle feeling. He is remarkably unpretending, both as a writer and a man. Although naturally courted by every circle and wooed to grace the assemblies of fashion and aristocracy, while his unblemished personal reputation and captivating manners make him welcome in every circle, yet he rarely indulges his social instincts, or gives play to those exquisite qualities of genial wit and philosophy at his command. He has become almost a complete book-worm; and with the exception of his own immediate and narrow circle, and an occasional dinner with Mr. Bancroft, and two or three other celebrities, Mr. Bryant is rarely found from home. He is an incessant worker; and in the little office in Nassau street, up four flights of stairs, he may be found seated gingerly on the edge of the chair at the corner of a large table piled mountain high with newspapers, documents, letters, proofs, tickets, invitations, and all the paraphernalia of an editorial sanctum, with scarce a space so large as the palm of his hand left upon which he rests that

portion of the paper immediately under his fingers as he writes. Sitting thus, bending intensely and with a student-like air over his little patch of table, his intellectual, pale face and keen eyes alive with the expression of the thought oozing out at his finger-ends—his nervous, slight, but well-knit frame held in a disagreeable state of tension by the unconscious excitement of composition, he is more purely and definitely a picture of the newspaper editor than may elsewhere be found in all the city. He seldom writes poetry now, except for five dollars a line, when our ambitious and good-natured friend George R. Graham wants to make a grand sensation with a show-number of his magazine; and; absorbed in politics, and devoted with all the earnestness and faithfulness of Samuel Rogers, to the accumulation of money, our American lyric poet lets all the world of philosophy, and aspiration, and hope, and golden dreaming glide by him, like a river past the plodding farmer on its banks; delves on daily in his garret den, driving before him the interests of a set of rascally politicians unworthy of his slightest thought, and sacrifices on the altar of money the most precious offering ever made to Pluto—detested and abhorred god. When we sometimes turn over the pages of this man's poetry, and see what a glorious genius was his, how high and pure his aspirations, how classic and crystalline the medium of his thought and intellect, and think to what a height he might have soared, we grow angry at the man himself; and in behalf of his country, literature, and of mankind at large, we refuse to forgive him for the crime against himself and us he has committed. But it is too late to call upon him to awake. The Samson of American song is shorn of his hyacinthine and strength-imparting locks; and though in good earnest the Philistine Delilahs were upon him, he could no longer mingle in the melodious fray. So, glorious Bryant, untimely buried in the didactic columns of the "Evening Post"—forget thyself and thy destiny, and be content!

Assistant editor of the "Evening Post," and son-in-law to its principal editor, Bryant, is Parke Godwin—one of the profoundest, most original, and most remarkable thinkers of the present age. He, alone, of all the disciples of those gigantic modern reformers, whose shadows begin to bathe the world in the light of a new morning, combines in his organization that tenacity of practical purpose, that comprehension of realities, and that self-possession in the advocacy of new ideas, utterly indispensable to their true or healthful progress. Were our Brisbanes and Channings, and others, whose ridiculous antics keep the world too busy laughing at them to attend seriously to what they say, imbued even with a tithe of the straightforward, practical earnestness of God-

win, many beautiful and grand ideas, now stuck fast in the mud, or disappeared entirely below the surface, would rise up in their true proportions, and make excellent progress over the road of life. Mr. Godwin has written many of the soundest and ablest articles, upon subjects of deep and practical social interest, that have appeared in our literature. His style is manly, massive, pure, and animated. As a speaker and lecturer, he is logical and instructive, though not decidedly elegant; and our literature has been enriched by him with many excellent and truthful translations from the German and other modern languages. He is a man, with the simple, noble and truthful heart of a child—firm as steel in his principles, his convictions, and his friendships, yet melting as wax to the voice of affection, of suffering, or persuasion. Devoted to the fine arts, in their serener forms, he ought to rank among the first of our æsthetic critics. But his temperament partakes too largely of the lymphatic element for that sparkling vivacity which alone makes talent acceptable or agreeable to the social world. He is, in a word, a little too ponderous for contemporary success. Hereafter, when his beautiful spirit is disembodied of its earthly form, and those steady eyes and shaggy locks are transmuted to the spiritual adornments of a spiritual head, he will look down with a half disdainful smile at the appreciation which posterity will bestow upon his works, and wonder why his contemporaries could not understand them as well. He is one of the few men who, never striving to be ahead of the age, really deserves to be so. In his personal relations he is of the best and wisest. We never heard that he had an enemy, and we know that all who are permitted to be acquainted with his life and character, love him with a true and disinterested affection. And, in thus summing up my estimate of the man, I need not say that I am not endorsing his opinions. Many, of them, however, are also mine; but with his political prejudices and partizan proclivities, as well as those of his father-in-law, I beg to disclaim all affinity.

CHAPTER X.

THE JOURNAL OF COMMERCE—GERARD M. HALLOCK—THE EXPRESS—
JAMES AND ERASTUS BROOKS—FREDERICK HUDSON AND THE HERALD
EDITORS.

THE "Journal of Commerce" is one of the most important commercial papers in New York, and has already, to a great extent taken the place of some of its older rivals. It has always been distinguished for consistency and bluntness, in its independent expression of opinion upon all political subjects, and for the reliability and general fairness of its statistical and other information. Seldom has it on any occasion been betrayed into an erroneous statement, and it is in all respects a model of candid and judicious management. Its principal editor was the late Mr. Gerard Hallock, an intense old foggy with a spice of fun, sarcasm and absolute jollity in his composition, quite amusing and refreshing. Seated on his high stool, his feet at least two feet from the floor, his hat drawn tightly on his head, and his ears laid back, and shoulders shrugged up, he scribbled away from morning till noon, little paragraphs of all sorts, statistical, witty, philosophical, political, everything that turned up. He had no out-of-door influence, and was very little seen beyond the precincts of his sanctum. He was a pretty far-seeing writer of his class, and understood the interests of trade and commerce thoroughly, and defended them with ability. The Journal is, in the best sense of the term, a respectable paper, and its influence is yearly growing stronger. It is a firm friend of the Constitution and its compromises, and has always done full justice to the South.

The "Express," with its morning and evening, and sixteen after "edishings," has had a hard fight, and is now but just beginning to reap the reward of its industry and perseverance. The editors, James and Erastus Brooks, are men of fine talent and shining qualities. Mr. James Brooks was for some time a representative in Congress, and on all occasions acquitted himself in an independent, manly, and straight-

forward manner. No man in Congress was more popular, either in Washington or among his constituents! and he has on more than one occasion, proved that his integrity to his party and his country, was not a purchasable commodity, but sprang indigenously from the soil of his very heart. Beside the two Messrs. Brooks, the other principal editor of the Express, is James F. Otis, formerly a poet of considerable distinction, and now an indefatigable, sprightly paragraphist, reporter and general critic. He is one of the most popular out-door editors we have in New York; is always "about" whenever there is anything going on, and for his lively qualities in social life is sought for on all occasions of good companionship. His incessant occupations on the innumerable editions of the journal to which he is attached, renders all serious and continuous effort of his mind hopeless, and he is one of a thousand instances of a fine genius being wasted, frittered, and squandered, for want of time, opportunity, and compensation, to justify its higher exercise. Like the great body of us poor scribblers, he is obliged to eke out his salary by contributions of hasty value to all sorts of papers, and by any kind of temporary literary labor that turns up. But he is always in a good humor, and always apparently contented with himself, the world, and everybody around him.

The office which employs the greatest number of subordinates is the Herald. At the head of them, and of Mr. Bennett's editorial assistants, and in his absence, of the entire establishment up stairs, is Mr. Frederick Hudson, the most invaluable and indefatigable of journalists, who, to the experience of many years in the higher departments of his profession, adds every mental requisite to the creation of a finished specimen of the craft. He has an easy, elegant, and striking style, readily adapting itself to every subject; and his knowledge is both minute and general in an unusual and surprising degree. His acquaintance with foreign affairs, and the current history of Europe, is greater than that of any other man connected with our press; and, bating that he lacks somewhat of courage and originality, he is all that can be looked for in a journalist. His brother is the commercial editor of the Herald, and works with great industry and success! but as we never read money articles, money always being very "tight" with us, whatever the commercial reporters may say about its being "easy in the street," we cannot say much in detail of his labors. We guess he is at least as honest as the times; and as the Herald is very rich and thinks more of reputation than money, we do not doubt that the commercial department of it is quite as reliable and a good deal more extensive than that of any other journal in the

city. Among the subordinates attached to the Herald in the editorial department, Dr. Wallis, of South Carolina, occupies an important position, and contributes extensively to the political department—assisted now and then by the Hon. Ex-Senator Westcott, whose witty and bitter paragraphs always hit exactly where they are aimed. The foreign editor and translator of modern languages for the Herald, is Mr. Char-met, an accomplished young Frenchman, who succeeded the unfortunate Michel, whose body was recently found in the East River.

CHAPTER XI.

A BATCH OF EDITORS AS THEY RUN—GEORGE P. MORRIS—N. P. WILLIS—
C. F. BRIGGS—THE BEACHES—HIRAM FULLER—C. B. BURKHARDT—
THE SUNDAY DISPATCH—MIKE WALSH—THE SUNDAY ATLAS—SOLOMON
S. SOUTHWORTH—THE "SACHEM."

LET us take our stand on the "Herald" corner this bright summer morning, and catch the editorial fish, as they swim along from up town to their respective dens and hiding holes for the day. They will be sure, nearly all of them, to run by in the course of half an hour or so. And, by the way, there is one of them poking his nose round the corner this very moment. What would you take him for now, that spruce, well-dressed, and natty-looking man, rather under the average stature—about the height of Bonaparte—a round, jolly face, good-natured mouth, a twinkling eye, and full black whiskers? He wears his hat with something of a military jaunt, and his clothes fit him as if they had grown to him. That is George P. Morris, the American song writer, who, notwithstanding all the puerilities that himself and others have written to his disadvantage, has, in one way or another, niched himself among the national poets of our country. General Morris has been an industrious and faithful worker in the great field of American literature. By his indomitable perseverance and incredible sacrifices was the old "New York Mirror" established and carried to a point of prosperity scarcely since reached by any New York weekly literary journal. In its pages are recorded the earliest coruscations of some of the brightest ornaments of our country's literature. Fay, Willis, Cox, Paulding, Hoffman, Drake, and many others of our best known names, first got a foothold on the steep hill-side of fame, under the patronage of General Morris. As to his own claims to the rank of a poet, we shall not discuss them here. We are determined not to say an ill-natured thing in this book—in fact, we have made a special contract with our publishers to fill it with the milk of human kindness and the molasses of

indiscriminate praise. At all events, General Morris has been successful; and if we cannot agree with the verdict of public opinion, we had rather admit our own want of taste than insinuate that General Morris and his friends, with whose warmest opinions in his favor he entirely agrees, can possibly be mistaken.

The co-editor, and, for many years, the inseparable companion of General Morris, is Mr. N. Parker Willis, whose name appears at the head of the "Home Journal," as a sort of lure to country young ladies of a sentimental and hysterical turn. It has been Mr. Willis' strange and curious destiny to be most praised for that of which he had the least, and most abused for that of which he was not guilty. The almost sole misfortune of Mr. Willis has been to have a juster appreciation of his own real qualities and powers than other men; and, popular and petted in turn, by many circles and classes, he has imbibed the unfortunate opinion that the esteem of the world at large is not worth the trouble of striving for, and has acquired a distaste for those healthier and manlier exhibitions of talent and genius which command the universal admiration and respect of mankind. The lamentable result of this has been, not merely that Mr. Willis is an egotist and a trifler in literature, but that he is satisfied with the appreciative applauses of the small circle in which he moves, and has, at length, convinced even his warmest admirers, that he does not possess the intellectual power to carry out the career of which his early efforts gave promise. He has, unquestionably, written some beautiful poetry, and much pretty and conceited prose, some of which is quite exquisite. But it is all fragmentary, prophetic, unsatisfactory, except as prognostic of future excellence; while, when we look for the consequence of this fertile promise, we find but a continuation of the same artificial and superficial trifling, which mocks the hope and tantalizes the heart. We know well that Mr. Willis has pursued this course, and arrived at this determination, through a careful, steady, and closely pursued policy, the policy of egotism; but, at the same time, we feel indignant at the conclusion upon which he has ventured, and wish he had chosen to strive for greatness rather than an unbounded reputation for aristocracy, at which all who know his real position profoundly laugh. To be the editor of a ladies' weekly journal, striving to make the uninitiated think him the pet of a parvenu aristocracy, is an ignoble fate for one whose natural stature was "taller than he might walk beneath the stars."

But we have permitted ourselves to become too much absorbed in our curly-headed and blue-eyed poet, and fear that several of the smaller fish

have run by undetected. Let us see. No—there goes Carlos Stuart, also a poet and editor. Formerly he used to stir up the lower stratum of the population by his terrific leaders on the revolution in Cuba, and in favor of penny postage, in the “Daily Sun.” Now he makes up statistical paragraphs for the “National Democrat, we believe. Just behind him, turning into the “Sun” office, are the Brothers Beach, two industrious men, who through their widely-circulated paper, the “Sun,” exert an influence upon the lower side or under-crust of public opinion almost incredible. The reason of the unbounded and unparalleled success of the “Sun” is simple, but it is a reason too often overlooked by literary projectors. Its tone is strictly adapted to the intellect, capacity, and needs, of the class to whom it is addressed. They all take it, they all like it, and all derive advantages from it; and it is to these gradual imperceptible raisers of the standard of intelligence among certain classes, who, by stooping almost to the level of those whom they would elevate, gain their confidence and win their attention, that the absolute, practical and real progress of society is indebted. They may not themselves even know the ultimate height to which the race is tending, but they work on, still earnestly and efficiently in the present. The penny press of this age is worthy of our admiration and careful study, as one of the most important and powerful institutions of the times; and the men who conduct it, no matter how unconscious they may be of all the bright thoughts and golden dreams that sometimes seem alone worthy of our contemplation, are yet doing a far weightier and efficient work than we.

But who is this intellectual, keen-looking man, coming across from Mercer’s? His eye looks as mild and gentle as that of a child, but his face has the devil in it. You may be sure he has a shrewd biting pen of his own, and that there is one particular corner in his ink-stand that bubbles up a perpetual fountain of the bitterest gall. This however, is all professionally—personally he is the mildest-mannered man that ever cut a literary throat or crucified a professional reputation; and so entirely unconscious is he of any wrong, that he cannot really see how people should be annoyed at a mere witticism, as he calls something that takes the skin off his victim. This is Harry Franco Briggs—a man of a most original and inventive imagination, profound critical knowledge of the philosophy of art and the belle-lettres, and as completely the slave of gigantic prejudices as Faust was of Mephistophiles. They say he writes for “Putnam,” as well as the “Sunday Courier,” and that he was the author of the *gigantic* “Bourbon” hoax. Sometimes we see articles in the “Evening Mirror,” which must have proceeded from his pen; but

he generally disclaims the authorship or responsibility of its articles, and we believe that the majority of the rude and malicious flings contained in that journal, are from the pen of its chief editor, Hiram Fuller. Mr. Fuller is a man of undeniable talent and policy, but he is gangrened with envy, and cannot for the life of him forego an opportunity of saying a severe or bitter thing about even those for whom he possesses the warmest friendship. Mr. Briggs stopped but a moment at the "Mirror" office, probably to hand in a paragraph which he had concocted at the expense of some poor devil during the morning, and is now on his way to the Custom House, where he keeps a comfortable berth of some fifteen hundred dollars a year, besides waifs and strays. In addition to his connection with the "Mirror," whatever it may be, he is one of the editors and proprietors of the "Sunday Courier," a paper which has worked its way up within the last three or four years to a large circulation, and a high position among the Sunday press. To the judicious management and careful business knowledge and experience of Mr. James L. Smith is the prosperity of the "Sunday Courier" principally owing.

A little farther up the street a middle-sized, pale-complexioned, and rather bilious-looking gentleman has just gone up stairs into the former office of the "Sunday Mercury." He is a man of decided talent and cleverness, but is also afflicted with the malignant fever, of which he has been for several years one of the most conspicuous and incurable cases. If Mr. Samuel Nichols would distil into the columns of the "Sunday Mercury" merely his wit and genius, and omit the malice, he would make it the most popular paper of its class in the city.* His partner, Dow, Jr., in other words, Mr. Page, of Vermont, has in times past occupied a conspicuous position among Sunday journalists, but we believe his health has now greatly failed, and that he seldom writes. His "Short Patent Sermons," published in the "Sunday Mercury," are really among the most original specimens of quaint and curious literature extant. They gave the "Sunday Mercury" a large notoriety, from which it has not yet fairly recovered, although to say truly, its efforts in that direction have neither been few nor feeble.

Striding down Ann street yonder, at a killing pace—for it is Saturday morning, and not a paragraph yet written for to-morrow's paper—is C. B. Burkhardt, one of the editors of the "Sunday Dispatch," especially devoted to the musical and dramatic department, and one of the few writers among us on those subjects whose productions are not ridiculous.

* We regret to say that since this article was written the Sunday Press has been deprived of a valuable member, by the death of Mr. N., resulting from an accident on one of our city railroads.

He is a writer in other departments of literature, of some considerable distinction, and as a translator, especially from German. His contributions to the "Sunday Dispatch" on music and the Opera have generally been characterized by good sense, good taste, and a thorough knowledge of his subject. The other editors of the "Dispatch" we do not know. We think, however, that we have tracked in its strong-built and independent columns the footsteps of Mike Walsh, who, when he is himself, and is not misled nor bamboozled by the prejudice and humbug of those around him, is one of the strongest and faithfulest writers upon subjects of practical and public reforms that we have in our city. He is the very antipodes of humbug, pretension, and hypocrisy; and his hatred of these evils has become morbid and little short of a monomania, which distorts his otherwise useful public life, and perverts the manliness of his talent and genius. With a little practical common sense, Mike Walsh would have inevitably been one of the first men of his day; for lack of it, he threatens to become the last. However, the "Dispatch" is controlled entirely by the stringent judgment and discreet experience of Mr. Williamson, its sole owner since the death of the gifted and unfortunate William Burns; and its columns are remarkable for the intrepidity, and yet discretion, with which they are conducted.

There are the Siamese Twins, the Castor and Pollux of Sunday journalism—the proprietors of the oldest Sunday paper in the city, and for a long time the most profitable—the "Sunday Atlas." Deacon Herrick, of Maine, and Mr. Ropes, of New York, were the original inventors of that paper some fifteen years ago; and in a few weeks after its commencement, being hard pushed for five dollars to buy a ream of paper, late on Saturday afternoon, to print their next morning's edition on, they sold out a third of the establishment to Frederick West. In a few years more, the paper was worth a profit of fifteen or twenty thousand dollars a year, and still continues to divide very nearly that sum between its proprietors—Mr. West having some time since sold out and retired from the concern, as he expressed it, "out and injured." The present condition of the "Atlas" and its past prosperity are owing entirely to the careful economy and untiring industry of its two proprietors; and as an illustration of the indomitable perseverance which characterizes them, we may mention that, when they were dismissed from the Custom House, and for months since, having occupied lucrative posts there since the Tyler administration, of which they were the organs in this city, they felt themselves so poor, in consequence of the loss of their offices, that they immediately went to work as compositors on their own paper—

although, we suppose, that neither of them is worth less than thirty or forty thousand dollars, besides the income of the "Atlas." The other editor of the "Atlas" is Solomon S. Southworth, more universally known to the reading public as "John Smith, Jr., of Arkansas;" under which sobriquet he has contributed profusely for the last twenty years to the press, in various parts of the country. He is one of our best-informed political writers, and has done good service to many political characters in and out of station; while his biographical and dramatic contributions to the "Atlas," and other papers, are always pervaded with an air of thorough acquaintanceship with the subject, with everything and everybody connected with it, with its past history and present condition, which make them extremely interesting. The peculiar point in the literary character of Mr. Southworth is the enormous development of his organ of ideality. When he sits down to compose a history, or a description of a scene or incident, he immediately completes it in his imagination in all its parts—not so much in reference to what it is or was, as to what it appears to him it might have been, or should have been—and then proceeds to narrate with the most imperturbable gravity that which he has conceived, with all the minuteness and imposing movement of indisputable fact. This he sometimes does by way of quizzing, and in fact has addicted himself so much to burlesque that he permits that style of narrative to pervade many of his more serious efforts, and frequently leads those who put their trust in him into the most ludicrous and embarrassing blunders. This curious idiosyncrasy of intellect apart, Mr. Southworth is an agreeable writer, and a popular and good-natured man. He also was an officer in the Custom House, but has for some time been permanently and publicly associated with the editorial conduct of the "Atlas."

By the way, we noticed just now coming round the corner, the Chevalier Picton, enveloped in the most barbarous of beards, make his way up-stairs into the "Sachem" office. This paper is edited by himself and Dr. Batchelder, assisted by H. W. Herbert and Mr. Foster. The dignified and patriotic tone of the political department of this paper gives it a wide popularity, especially among the members of the order of "United Americans," whose organ it is. The intelligent, sprightly, and always just criticisms upon music and the drama which appear in the "Sachem," and which remind one of the vigorous "Vivian" in the London "Leader," are generally supposed to be from the pen of Madame Julie de Marguerites. Indeed we know not who else in this country could write them

CHAPTER XII.

THE WEEKLY PRESS—THE LITERARY WORLD—CORNELIUS MATHEWS—E. A. DUYCKINCK—WILLIAM S. PORTER—THE ALBION—HENRY C. WATSON—LEWIS GAYLORD CLARK—RUFUS W. GRISWOLD—RICHARD WILLIS—WALL STREET JOURNAL.

WE are in Nassau street, just in time to catch the editors of the "Literary World" on the way to their office. Look carefully at that small-sized, happy-looking man in spectacles. That is Cornelius Mathews, the immortal Puffer Hopkins, who has been so much, and so virulently abused for faults he did not possess and overlooked for good qualities he did, that he has lost in his own case all sense of the just appreciation of things, and feeds his vanity at the expense of his reputation, while in sheer despite of those who have told him of his faults, he aggravates them to an inflammation which has become a sort of moral gout, converting the whole man into one immense twinging toe, carefully to be nursed and defended against the encroachments of marauding or unconscious boot heels. He has literary talent, invention, and imagination, of a high order; and had he not committed the fatal mistake of Betty, who wished to see herself ride by in the coach, he would have been among the most honored and popular of our American authors. But his insatiate and suicidal egotism has neutralized half the effects of his talents and natural gifts, and he is constantly wasting his strength in fighting for a position infinitely lower than that which would be accorded him by universal consent, if he would cease to fight at all. We see with pleasure that he is becoming more and more alive to the truths that we have here had the courage to tell him, and we believe the time will come when he will set himself seriously to the fair, and honest utterance of that which is within him, and will take his rank among the best and best estimated of our native writers. His contributions to the "Literary World" are many of them excellent; and in a word, that paper itself is conducted with a marked ability, and discretion which has imparted to it a firm and enviable reputation. The ostensible editor of it is Evert

A. Duyckinck, one of the finest and most genuine Knickerbocker brains that has come down to us from the olden time. He is a gentle and appreciative critic, a warm and devoted friend, and a gentleman of polished address and refined manners. His criticisms betray good-nature, forbearance, and true knowledge of his subject, and he is one of the best read men, and altogether the most admirable off-hand critic, we have among us.

We must now step across the Park and pay our respects to some of the members of the Saturday weekly press who burrow in that region. Conspicuous among them, and among all, wherever he may be, either on the turf or at the bar, in the bowling-saloon or midnight-revel, is William T. Porter, the Tall Son of New York, and editor of that world-renowned repository of wit, humor, slang, flash, and horse-talk, the "Spirit of the Times." He who knows not Wm. T. Porter deserves not to be known, and has wasted his life to little purpose.

Next to the office of the "Spirit of the Times," is that of the Albion, edited by a retired linen-draper from England, whom we have never yet had the pleasure of seeing. We have broken our shins over three or four of his high-flying tory leaders, in stumbling about among the ample pages of the Albion in search of friend Watson's searching musical criticisms and Professor Howe's more instructive than sparkling articles upon the drama. We believe that both these gentlemen have now retired from the Albion, and we thus miss the only inducement that could possibly prevail upon us to look into its pages.

There, by the way, goes Harry Watson, one of the best musical critics in the United States. He was born and educated in the midst of the theatrical and musical profession in London, and has himself thoroughly studied not only the science of music, but the art and mystery of composition. Having heard and carefully listened to all the great artists, and all the great musical solemnities, of the great British capital for several years, he has stored a naturally appreciative and acute mind with all that may be known on the subject of the divinest of arts. We have carefully watched his criticisms wherever they have appeared; and we believe, with here and there a bias of personal prejudice to which all are liable, they are most reliable and valuable. We must confess, however, that they would possess an additional charm, were they a little more carefully written; for Watson is emphatically a slovenly writer. "'Tis true, and pity 'tis 'tis true;" and would he only reform himself in this respect, his literary compositions would be invaluable, whatever may be the fate or merit of those musical ones which under the name of polkas,

marches and songs, and all sorts of things, are lying upon the counters of our music stores and the pianos of our misses.

Ho ! hilloa, there Mr. Phonographer ! We had like to have forgotten one of the most charming and delightful members of our great profession, simply because, showing his face but once a month in the grand rush and hurry of our scrambling, quotidian, Broadway existence, his dauger-reotype was erased from our memory. We can not pardon ourselves even for the momentary obscuration of our field of vision, which led us to overlook so genial and good-natured a star as now rises upon the horizon. That handsome man there, with his cane and unavoidable bundle of magazines and papers, or some such trash, the same we verily believe we encountered some ten years ago on the sunny side of Broadway and thirty, is Lewis Gaylord Clark, editor of the monthly "Gossip to Readers and Correspondents," and haberdasher general of the small wares that fill the other pages of that literary china-shop, the "Knickerbocker Magazine." But the "Gossip" has preserved the whole concern from the otherwise too perceptible odor of an old fogysm, that would ere now have buried it full fifty fathoms deep in the Cypress Hills of literature—while its poor ghost would have been bankrupt of sufficient assets to pay the mild taxation of the board of directors, for the privilege of screaming to the midnight wind its gibbering apostrophes to the trees of that ghostly region. The genius of Clark is not sporadic and individual, so much as it is general and epidemic. It is a sort of intellectual amber, in which long and short straws, and other worthless fragments, are preserved and made precious and beautiful. We look forward every month to his sparkling "Gossip" with as insatiable an anxiety as for Blackwood himself; and long may he preserve that inexhaustible fund of gay spirits and happy humor, which renders him the favorite of the domestic circle, the friend and playmate of all good children with whom he comes in contact, and the well-beloved brother of all the members of his profession !

There goes by, Dr. Rufus W. Griswold, whose name is as familiar to the American reader as that of Dr. Watts—not so much for what he has done himself, as for his presentation of the works of others. It is fortunate to the cause of bibliography that his talents took the peculiar turn they did—as his laborious and incessant researches into the history of the literature of this country have made him the American Sismondi, and have contributed to the archives of American literature more valuable materials than it otherwise possesses altogether. Still, to the mere reading public, the absolute devotion of his life to those pursuits is a

subject of regret ; for, say what we may of the errors and prejudices of Rufus W. Griswold, yet there are few men who are possessed of his natural abilities, or endowed with a more exquisite sensibility and a more sustaining enthusiasm. Had he early developed his sense of self-reliance he might have risen upon his own isolated merits to an enviable height in literature ; while at present he must content himself with being adjudged its most faithful historian and most appreciative critic.

Another weekly paper, professedly devoted to music and the fine arts, is the "Musical Times," edited by Richard Willis, brother of N. P. It is made up principally of re-hashed German transcendentalisms, and puerile speculations on abstruse, exploded, or ridiculous theories. Richard Willis, in boyhood, was taken up as the pet of a set of literary old maids, and pronounced to be a great musical genius. They eventually persuaded Mr. Jonas Chickering to send him to Europe, to become a great composer. He went, and immured himself for two or three years in a small town in Germany—never even visited either Italy or France—and came back the weakest dish of milk and water that ever was skimmed. As the results of his studies, and the sole efforts of his gigantic genius, he has produced four waltzes and a set of polkas—the equal of which can be improvised by any tolerably educated young lady. Richard—poor Richard—has all the self conceit of his brother, N. P., without any of his genius.

The "Wall Street Journal," edited by Mr. Robinson (not Wm. E. of sausage notoriety), is a very spirited and useful chronicle of financial movements, operations in real estate, &c., &c., and often contains piquant and well considered hints on other topics of current interest.

There are several other weekly publications in New York, but not possessed of any very marked characteristics. With the religious press it is not our intention to meddle, at present.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HERALD AND ITS INFLUENCE—WASHINGTON IRVING—GEORGE BANCROFT—R. H. STODDARD—DR. MAYO—GULIAN C. VERPLANCK—RICHARD B. KIMBALL—GEORGE BUSH—HENRY JAMES—DR. E. H. DIXON—DR. E. E. MARCY.

For some years it was the custom, especially with all unsuccessful journals and writers, to sneer at and abuse the "Herald." But gradually, as the fact became more and more apparent that it was entirely beyond their reach, we hear no more of their criticisms and complaints; and the "Herald" is now spoken of as an "established institution," with which nobody can afford to quarrel.

The reputation of the "Herald" is world-wide. Wherever men read or care for news—wherever civilization has an agency or an outpost, or wherever the great Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-American races are known—the "Herald" is a recognized authority. No other paper in the world, with the single exception of the "Times" of London, can, in any degree, compare in extent and universality of reputation with the "New York Herald." This has been brought about, solely and exclusively, by the unusual talents, foresight, and perseverance of James Gordon Bennett—a man who, assailed in every manner and by every device that envy and malice can contrive, in wreaking themselves upon the object of their hate, exercises at this moment a more important influence upon public opinion, and even upon the legislative and congressional discussions, which result in the laws by which the community is governed, than all the other newspaper writers of the country. The party press must be measured by states and sections, if we would compare its influence with that of the "New York Herald." By its great wealth and illimitable resources for obtaining every species of information, and employing, if not the highest order of talent, at least the greatest amount of enterprize, in every department; by the completeness of its business regulations and the untiring energy that, emanating from the central

brain of the establishment, controls every movement, he has it in his power to bring upon any given point, at a moment's notice, an amount of argument and persuasion, illustrated, as it is, by an impregnable array of facts, which is perfectly overwhelming. This very position, too, secures the "Herald" from the common and too frequently deserved charge of venality and corruption, so incessantly hurled against the press, and more than half neutralizing the good it should accomplish. While other journals, making lofty professions of honesty and incorruptibility, feigning to look with disdain and horror upon the terrible "Herald," can be bought, body and soul, boots and breeches, for a few dollars, the wealthy "Herald" can afford to turn up its nose in contempt at all efforts at bribery, and is forced, as a mere matter of policy, to be independent. We say what will be readily recognized as truth by all acquainted with the operations and movements of the press in New York, when we declare that no paper in the city is so difficult to influence or bias, or to be brought to the advocacy of any certain measure or interest, as the "New York Herald." Indeed, we cannot well see how it can afford to be venal. The time may have been when it was less unpurchasable. Of that, we know nothing; but we do know that, while having purchased, over and over again, for a mere pittance, not, in the most exorbitant instance, exceeding two shillings a line, the editorial endorsement of several very self-righteous papers, the "Herald" has steadily refused large sums, and the most flattering inducements, for its advocacy of that which it would, perhaps, voluntarily have advocated if left alone. When we say that the opinions of other papers have been purchased, we do not mean it in a very derogatory sense. We do not mean that they have been bribed to advocate crime, vice, or error, nor that they have been bought off from attacking men or institutions. We simply mean that their publishers or editors have been induced, as a mere professional matter of business, to employ their time and talents, and occupy their columns, in advocating the interests or explaining the advantages of certain matters which otherwise they either would not have noticed at all, or else would have dismissed with brief and common-place editorial suavity. In this we confess we do not see anything heinously wrong, so that the editor always reserves to himself the right and the duty of advocating nothing, either in the arts, sciences, literature, or in politics, with a bad tendency or a dishonest purpose. The greatest evil experienced from this kind of farming out the editorial opinion to the highest bidder, is its depreciating effect upon the character and estimation of the press itself. Because the puffs and commendations, the

fulsome eulogies of mediocre artists, writers, actors, and public performances and exhibitions generally, are powerfully calculated to depress the standard of public taste and retard the progress of a refined and thorough appreciation of the arts. In this sense every editor who writes one word of praise of any man, woman, or thing, not strictly in his naked judgment just and well deserved, inflicts, to the extent of his power and influence, an injury upon mankind. But this is a logic and a morality too searching and too close to be applied to any human interest or institution at present existing on earth. The lawyer advocates the cause that pays him. The physician clings with blind zeal and murderous fatuity to the venerable errors that swell his fees; and even the ministers and servants of God do not blush to adapt their teachings and their doctrines to the length of their parishioners' purses; and if one of them, comfortably seated among his small and humble congregation in the interior, who never dreamed of gilded candlesticks and velveted pews, and the Romanesque paraphernalia of our grand cosmopolite semi-Popish temples, receives a call to a higher field of labor and a larger salary, his doctrines and tenets expand like the flower of a bulbous root into whose glass the impassioned spinster pours a vial of ammonia. Therefore, although we must admit that it is strictly right to advocate nothing for pay which an editor would not naturally advocate without it, we must at the same time confess that while human nature and society are conducted upon their present systems, which compel every man to depend upon the pecuniary results of his own individual efforts for the adequate support of himself and family, so long will money secure the favor, the advocacy, and the endorsement, of the various organs and oracles of public opinion.

We have now rapidly, yet faithfully, sketched the principal personages connected with journalism in New York. We have estimated their various talents and genius as nearly as we could as if we had no personal acquaintance whatever with any one of them; and if we have at all been influenced by our own feelings in respect to any, it has been by making an over allowance in our own mind for the possibility of being influenced by personal dislike or indignation. As a picture, hastily sketched it is true, of the state and condition of the New York Press at the present time this chapter possesses an intrinsic value, belonging by no means either to the author, or to any skill he may have exerted in producing it. We cannot more appropriately bring this portion of our work to a close than by a brief mention of other distinguished characters, both male and female, who belong to the world of letters and are yet not actually con-

nected with the public press. Of these is, and for a long time has been, Washington Irving, who, although now verging close upon the Scripture span of life, still bears in his lineaments those pleasant and refreshing traits of innocence and real benevolence, illuminated by genius and imagination, which shine so gloriously through all his works. He has still, despite his years, one of the handsomest and most engaging faces you will meet with in the city. His smile is still full of sunshine, and the grasp of his hand as cordial and warm as in early youth. At least so they say who know him. We have only seen him from a distance, and admire him as we admire the steady shining star that looks each night into our window with its cheerful and pleasant ray. Mr. Irving is a shy and retired man, and in general society, into which, however, he very rarely goes, says little, and shrinks from those attentions that all are ever so anxious to pay the brightest and worthiest ornament of American literature. We once, some years ago, secreted ourselves in the office of the Union Place Hotel, to get an innocent glimpse of Geoffrey Crayon as he passed along the hall on his way to the studio of Charles Martin, who has had the honor of creating for posterity the one portrait of the historian of his native state, by which he will be known to after ages. Irving still walks firm and briskly, and betrays few or none of those painful premonitions that speak the disenchanting approach of age. Long may the sunshine from his honest heart and glorious brain illuminate that noble and benevolent countenance! He is the patriarch of American literature; and when he departs for the spiritual world, his tribe, his race, and mankind, will have lost one of their most valuable ornaments.

Another visiter to the rooms of the artist we have named, who has become the acknowledged painter of distinguished men and lovely women, is the Hon. George Bancroft, a slim and in every way commonplace-looking man, whom you would as soon suspect of spinning ribbons out of his mouth, as histories and grand literary achievements out of his brain. He lives in the vicinity of Union Square, in a state of elegant retirement; and say what they will of the ingratitude of the world towards men of letters, he is a conspicuous instance of the high value of respectable mediocrity in literature, when attended by shrewdness in business, and industry in private diplomacy.

I met yesterday in the Park a former crony of Bayard Taylor, a juvenile iron-founder, or something of that sort, by the name of R. H. Stoddard, who has an imagination as glorious as the big ladlesfull of melted pig metal that they pour into those moulds in the manufacture of cooking-stoves, and whose fancy is a great deal more delicate and exube-

rant than those beautiful devices which appear on the front plates of the stoves aforesaid. He has in reality moulded some of the neatest and sweetest verses in the language; and we think he would be doing us all a great service by forsaking the ladle and clinging to the pen, and by exchanging the streams of melted metal for strains of melting sentiment. Now, Stoddard, don't you dare to get into a white heat over this cast that I am taking of you, and let the rosy current of indignation overflow the melting-pot of your heart, and rise to your cheeks, or emit sparks from your eyes. You know you are the very Benvenuto Cellini of founders, without his brass, and the sooner you leave off founding cooking-stoves, and commence founding your own reputation, the sooner you will begin to convert your pot-metal into gold and silver. Give up your iron founding and your Custom House, and become famous.

Yonder goes Dr. Mayo, the author of "Kaloolah," and some other equally delightful books. "Kaloolah" is the romance of a dreamer, a poet, a student, and a man of the world—lacking somewhat in that probability of incident and vraisemblance of characterization that imparts life to Cooper and Scott, and which makes us swallow down without gulping all Herman Melville's delicious lies. "Kaloolah" is, however, a work of exquisite taste, skill and fine genius. Mayo is a lazy man, and loves his ease, or he would be a preëminent one.

That short rubicund gentleman you see yonder, turning into Broadway, is a legitimate descendant of the old Knickerbocker race. His fathers were contemporaries, friends and counsellors of Peter Stuyvesant and his illustrious successors, and he himself fully partakes the genial characteristics of those people and those times. If you follow him up Broadway you will find him turning down some side street somewhere near the Hospital and entering his capacious library, stuffed full of books of all descriptions, and with just room enough on his centre table for his portable desk to lie yawning at both mouths with bundles of half swallowed papers and memorandums. Here he lives and sees the days and years glide by as peacefully, and almost as thoroughly abstracted from all the real and everyday interests that go tramping and bustling around him, as the stone St. Paul in the niche opposite the Museum. Mr. Verplanck is one of our most elegant and accomplished scholars and critics; has written many valuable contributions to our literature, and is principally known to the outside world by his acute and appreciative criticisms upon Shakspeare. He is not an ambitious man, in the broad sense of the term, and is satisfied with that unquestioned position, and unreluctant esteem afforded by the contacts and contingencies of

domestic and social life. It is a fault in him that his ambition is not equal to that of many less worthy to entertain so noble a guest.

But we must step across the street to pay our respects to Mr. Richard B. Kimball, author of the "St. Leger Papers"—one of the most remarkable philosophical fictions produced since the Faust and Wilhelm Meister of Goethe. It is profound, startling, enchanting; sometimes brilliant, often fervid and impassioned, and in point of execution is a model of that style of composition. We regard it as a real misfortune to literature that Mr. Kimball is a devoted lawyer and man of business, and only finds time to write when the reactive necessities of his richly endowed intellect absolutely require that sort of exercise by way of repose and relaxation. Mr. Kimball is not hereafter to be a stranger in the field of authorship, but may be numbered, if not with its professional, yet among its most successful, harvesters. Mr. Kimball is still a very young man, and we have every right and reason—now that through the blessings of homeopathy and Dr. Marcy his health is restored—to predict for him a long and brilliant career.

Do you see that tall, white-haired, intellectual-looking gentleman, slim and somewhat stoop-shouldered, closely wrapped in a not very new nor particularly well-brushed black Spanish cloak? He stops, you see, at Sweeney's eating-house. It is about dinner-time at that aristocratic establishment, and this old gentleman is a regular customer there, where, to his unsophisticated taste, the plain sixpenny steak and mashed turnips and potatoes, with three cents worth of extra bread and pickles, is as deliciously and completely satisfying to his appetite as if he were eating at the Rocher Cançale, or the Clarendon Hotel, with every delicacy ever conceived by Soyer within reach or call. Little reckes that glorious old man what he eats, or where he eats it, or what he wears, or how it is put on. But his face is humorous with the spiritual intelligence within, that gleams through his serene eyes and lights up every lineament with the electric flashings from the spiritual world, whom his own purity and genius have attracted close about him. That is George Bush, the great expounder of the doctrines of Swedenborg, and head of the new Jerusalem Church in this country. He was for many years one of the most eminent Protestant clergymen and Oriental scholars in the land; and his distinguished and unapproached merits in both these departments are willingly conceded from one end of the country to the other. Every college and university in the Union echoed with the sound of his name and the splendor of his scholastic achievements; while the purity, the fervor, and the moral grandeur of his private life surrounded him with

the halo through which the darts of calumny could not penetrate. Led by his love of learning, or, we would feign believe, by some divine instinct, specially communicated to him for the purpose, he at length encountered the giant, Swedenborg; being, perhaps, in all the ranks of our scholars, and philosophers, and divines, the only living man capable of standing up face to face before that seer and prophet of a new dispensation, and of understanding and feeling the full force and magnitude of the truths contained in his immortal works, or of imparting them intelligibly and faithfully to the common apprehension of his fellow-men. Accordingly, with the simplicity and faith of a child—appalled at no amount of labor entailed by the undertaking, and discouraged by no doubt as to the clearness, and purity, and truthfulness of his own conceptions, the labor was begun and faithfully continued. Herculean as it is in an intellectual point of view, yet has Professor Bush found it but a labor of love; and his translations now extant of the writings of Swedenborg will live for ever as one of the most gigantic monuments of human devotion, perseverance, and scholarship. Whatever people may think, or affect to think of the peculiar doctrines contained in the writings of Swedenborg, none now deny the surpassing greatness of that man's intellect. And the philosophical world has recently found itself compelled to award him as elevated a station in the world of science and natural philosophy as theologians and divines had already conceded him in that of morals and religion. Every Sabbath, Prof. Bush faithfully and eloquently expounds some portion of the Scriptures by the lamp of Swedenborg's inspirations, to a select, enlightened, and slowly-increasing congregation, the germs of an entirely new, more real, more practical dispensation of the religion of Jesus Christ—the forerunner of that millennial reformation in the Church of God upon earth, which corresponds spiritually to the physical and moral reforms now in progress toward their fulfillment, and both of which must as infallibly and surely come as the sun continues to give light and heat, and the power of germination and progress to the physical universe, or as the great Central Sun Himself streams forth His undying love through the remotest bounds of infinite space. Considered in any light we will, George Bush is unquestionably one of the most remarkable men that this or any other age has produced.

Henry James, the lecturer and writer, well deserves his place here, however, as one of the most original and vigorous thinkers of the age. He does not confine himself exclusively to the doctrine of any sect nor individual; his is a nature too original and creative for that;—yet with such variations in detail and scientific form as depend upon his peculiar

organization, he adds his magnificent strength to propel forward those grand and fundamental ideas of the harmony, prosperity, and happiness of the unitary race of men, which now swell in the heart and inspire the hopes and labors of all true spirits. His lectures, some of which have already been collected and printed, are among the most startling, profound, and original productions ever submitted to the public. And although Mr. James does not possess a fascinating way of expressing his ideas and seducing the reader into good humor with what he is about to encounter, yet few appreciative minds can come in contact with the bold, burning, and triumphant logic of this intuitive reasoner and irresistible thinker, without undergoing a greater or less change or perturbation from his usual routine of contemplation. Those who are ripe enough to receive the seed of his beautiful thoughts, instantly become converts to the glorious ideas he promulgates; while upon the less mature he never fails to produce an impression which, sooner or later, must bring them to the same point of view with himself.

Another of this new order of literary and philosophical spirits, by which the present age is characterized, over all that have preceded it, is Dr. Hempel, a Homeopathic physician of eminence and also a voluminous and eloquent philosophical writer. He is an impersonation of the highest grade of the German mind; and probably very few brains were ever created so full of beautiful theories and symmetrical, philosophical creations as his. At the same time he is strongly grounded in all the great fundamental principles of the reforms, now sweeping humanity onward in its career, and has produced, at least, one work which will not die. This is his book showing the absolute correspondence and identity of the doctrines taught by Fourier and by Swedenborg, and proving that those of the former are the inevitable, material and physical ultimates of the later—that Association, as taught by Fourier, is the scientific resolution of the great problem of the spiritual life of man as propounded by Swedenborg, from his own direct experiences in the spiritual world. This book is an admirable and invaluable study to all who would inform themselves, without too great an expenditure of time and trouble, of the leading features of those ideas which are the origin of those mysterious and startling influences every where bursting out all about us. The medical works of Dr. Hempel are extensive and extremely valuable; consisting as they do not only of his own original contributions, to the science of Homeopathy, but of the most careful and laborious translations of those intricate and difficult works of Hahnemann which there is scarcely another writer living who could have fairly and

faithfully rendered into English. Dr. Hempel is still quite a young man, and we have a right to expect much—and much that is valuable, still from his powerful and prolific pen.

Another medico-literary man of altogether a different genius, but sufficiently eccentric and sparkling in his way, to detain us for an agreeable minute and a half, is Dr. E. H. Dixon, the trenchant editor of the Scalpel, whose terrible gashes upon the bloated and corrupt body of the old school of medical practice has let out more feter and corruption than the whole profession, from Hippocrates to Mott, have ever cured. Dr. Dixon's Scalpel—beside being one of the most amusing, piquant and lively periodicals that has made its appearance in the world since Blackwood and Kit North—must be regarded as an indispensable *seton* established in the medical world, for the purpose of keeping the poor patients' body politic in some tolerable state of health and purification. If by some sudden edict all the periodicals in America were to be annihilated, with one exception, and the choice of that exception were left to us, we certainly think we should be compelled to choose the Scalpel. The Doctor himself, personally, is as odd a genius as his periodical. Tall, wiry, and with a powerful bilious and muscular organization, he rushes along the street like an embodied destiny, or the Dutchman with the steam cork leg that would not stop. His small gray eyes twinkle with fun and humor upon the slightest provocation; and there is an unctuousness in his very tone of voice, that speaks of latent jokes and witticisms held in solution in his subdued and almost cynical temperament, as some subtle and destructive chemical agent is concealed in those perfectly harmless bedbug exterminators upon which our friend Lyon makes so much money and such excellent poetry in the advertising columns of the Herald.

We must leave the still unexhausted list of our medical writers, with a brief mention of Dr. E. E. Marcy, author of the most popular hook yet written in explanation of the theory and practice of Homeopathy, and editor of the able Homeopathic Quarterly Review, established by our friend Radde. Dr. Marcy emigrated but a few years since to New York from Connecticut; but by the skillfulness of his treatment of disease, and the unswerving integrity of his personal character, he has already acquired a commanding position in the field of medicine, while his literary productions have conferred upon him a distinguished rank among the medical authors of our country. He is still among the youngest, both of practitioners and authors; and, deeply imbued with the importance of the cause, he has sacrificed all minor considerations, all love for beautiful but

unprofitable theorizing, to its interests, and devotes himself with a singleness of purpose and indomitable perseverance, to a career which truth has marked out for him to pursue, that must terminate in placing him among the conspicuous benefactors of his race.

CHAPTER XIV.

H. T. TUCKERMAN—J. T. HEADLEY—D. K. MITCHELL—MRS. E. OAKES SMITH
—MRS. CHILD—MRS. KIRKLAND.

ONE of the most dreamy and voluptuous faces one encounters under a *hat*, in his walks in Broadway, is that of Henry T. Tuckerman, a Yankee by birth and blood, but a pure Italian of the most delicious *dolce far niente* organization in sentiment, character, and imagination. He lived some years in Italy, his soul, like a crystal chalice, drinking in the balmy air, and sunny life, and delicious clime, until his whole nature became imbued with its subtle incense; and now, at scarcely forty-five, returned to the busy haunts of his money-making countrymen, he still lives the serene and tranquil life of the student and the poet, deaf to all the crashing turmoil that whirls around, and feeding his heart upon those splendid dreams that rise and expand their glittering wings only from out the clear and undisturbed fountains of the heart. As he goes by, wrapped in his Spanish cloak, and with his speculative eye fixed steadily upon the walk, I envy him, not only for all he is, but still more for all he is not. Tuckerman writes only when he has the will. When the inspiration comes, the sibyl speaks; otherwise he is silent and muses happy and contented till the fit again sweeps over him. He has a genial fancy, a tender and musical style, and if he would whip and spur his muse, as we, poor insane devils, are obliged to do, would be the first in the race. But he has fortunately had the courage to accept and abide by a happier lot, and his days pass serenely in peace, his eye undimmed and his face unwrinkled by care and commonplace anxiety. He is still in the very prime of life, and we hope to hear glorious things of him ere his first half century is over.

On the opposite side of the street, threading his way carefully, yet swiftly and fearlessly, among the omnibuses and vehicles, is a man of directly the opposite temperament. Full of enthusiasm, of fire, of determination, ambition, will, genius even, he is ever restless, ever hard at

work at something, and generally to a most excellent purpose. Say what we will of the carelessness and slovenliness, and even the commonplaceness of much that J. T. Headley has written, yet we must confess that there are few of our writers who may ever hope to achieve the popularity he has already gained, before the brightness of his youth has past. When his imagination becomes mellowed by the ripening and strengthening influences of time, when his prejudices are soothed and allayed, the bitterness and indiscretion of his impulses subdued, and the lights and shades of his intellect harmonized to their proper proportions, Mr. Headley must produce works of a high and lasting merit. Much that he has already written, interwoven as it is with our national history, and the history of events that beacon themselves above the sea of time, must be immortal. But he has as yet by no means done his best; and we, as well as all the world, expect much from him.

Within the last two or three years, a young man of the more aristocratic class of our population, possessing family position, wealth, and unblemished reputation, has made his appearance in polite circles, and has achieved a very decided sensation. During the past winter he has really been quite a lion in good society, and the pet of all the ladies who either are, or affect to be fashionable. He has not borne his honors very meekly, but has splurged considerably upon the strength of his new-fledged wings—although we never heard that he was either impertinent or ill-natured—and that is more, we guess, than he will say of me when he reads this paragraph. The works upon which he chiefly depends for his present reputation are, the “Lorgnette,” and the “Reveries of a Bachelor.” They are elegantly written, and betray an intimate knowledge of the conventionalities and superficialities of society; but, either from an inability or disinclination on the part of the author, they do not sound the depths of human nature, nor contribute much to the stock of original ideas afloat. The author of these works is Mr. D. K. Mitchell, otherwise called “Ik Marvel,” who has been so over-puffed by his friends, and so neglected by the rest of the public, that he is greatly puzzled to know exactly where he stands—a dilemma, however, from which his good opinion of himself threatens to rescue him in the most agreeable manner. He is quite a young man, a little of a coxcomb, wears straw-colored kids, and mustachios, and uses a tortoise-shell eye-glass.

We have thus rapidly cast our eyes over the broad field of current literature in New York, and furnished our readers with daguerreotype sketches of the principal laborers therein. A few we have probably omitted; but if so, it is from ignorance or oversight. Those who find them-

selves in this category will have the kindness to forgive us for our apparent slight, and console themselves for not being noticed in a very little book like mine, by getting themselves inserted in the next edition of the very big book of my friend Dr. Griswold, who will do them up in the most elegant manner and at short notice, if they will only send that prince of literary diagnosticians a lock of their hair, or a paring of their thumb-nail.

But there still remains a small and perfumed corner of this somewhat sterile field where bloom the roses and the tulips, the pinks and pansies, the daisies and buttercups of literature; and to this sacred precinct, this seraglio of Apollo, where the grand Sultan of poetry and art choicely keeps his choicest beauties, do we now direct our steps.

There, ring the bell. Titivate your hair and cravat. Throw open the door, and boldly enter the realm of blue-stockingsdom. Here, seated on chintz-covered sofas, or lounging in groups about the handsome apartments, may be seen—or at any rate might have been seen before the fair hostess became a *lionne* at Washington, and made Congress put her in the appropriation bill—the leading feminine celebrities in the world of literature. But the fact is, that this petticoat Republic of Letters has been, since the visit of Miss Bremer to this country, partially disbanded and broken up, and each of its members has established a petty sovereignty on her own book. This is a great pity; for the charming reunions of distinguished men and women that used every week, in the winter time, to take place at the house of our philosophical and contemplative friend were a nucleus and a germ, from which we have anticipated a beautiful and kindly growth of intellectual and social influences. The extremes, or outer edges of the two sorts of society—the intellectual and the money circles—were gradually approximating through the influence of these assemblages, and had, in fact, in several instances positively interlaced and become fairly united; but we know not whether it was from rivalry and personal misunderstandings, or from the fact that literary people and artists, thus left to themselves and thrown entirely upon each other for their conversational resources, unavoidably found themselves ennuyed; yet so it is, that these parties have become heads of the *ton*, and the elements of which they were composed are scattered far and wide. The philosophy of feminine literature in New York, however, is well worth the studying. It shows that female labor in this, as well as in all other departments of industry and production, is but slightly rewarded in comparison to that of the other sex, both in pay and reputation. The days of butterfly magazinery seem to be approximating

rapidly to their close ; and the butterflies who created and embellished this institution are disappearing with it. It may be, however, that we do injustice to these agreeable and interesting beings, and that we only miss them from the literary world because we are no more among them and of them.

Conspicuous among the living literary women of this country is Mrs. E. Oakes Smith, whose graceful minor poems are well known, and whose higher and more sustained efforts have manifested the possession of imagination and genius. We think her forte is in dramatic writing, and we cannot doubt that were she to seriously busy herself in that direction, she would meet with success. Mrs. Smith is among the boldest and freest of her sex's thinkers ; and some of her articles and lectures upon marriage, female labor, and the general relations and condition of women in society at the present day, have excited considerable attention.

A noble and beautiful illustration of female goodness is quietly letting go by her useful and lovely life in complete and voluntary seclusion from all society, save that of a circle of the most intimate and loving friends. She preserves, in the full experience and knowledge of mid-life, all the freshness and purity, and unconscious vivacity of childhood ; and that she so sedulously retires from all common associations is a great and positive loss to society, for no woman we have ever known is better calculated, nor more fully qualified to embellish the best society, and impart value and meaning to the conventionalisms of life, than Lydia Maria Child. Anchorite as she is, sometimes an extraordinary occasion brings her from her seclusion ; and those who are permitted to come within the magnetic influence of her glorious spirit never forget the day that was so bountiful to them. Mrs. Child has written much, but always carefully and well, and always with a steady, firm and apparent meaning. Her philosophy is a transparent one, as clear as crystal, and as beautiful. It is the philosophy of love. She believes that God created all things from love, and sustains them by love, and that they should help and sustain each other by love alone. Her books are the most beautiful of sermons, and her whole life and character an illustration of the loftiest and most refined religion. Her influence upon her contemporaries has been perhaps wider and greater than that of any other living woman, for her pleasant yet unpretending, her logical yet utterly unstrained, arrangement of subject and beauty of illustration, are as precious as they are rare. The works of Mrs. Child are the most priceless gems in the great mine of female literature ; and although others may have written more pretentiously, and exhibited more apparent fire, and more superfice of enthu-

siasm, yet nowhere can there be found an equal development of the truly beautiful, the truly wise, and the truly good. We feel a thrill of pride and pleasure in thus recording an honest and faithful opinion of the literary merits of Mrs. Child. We love to see her works lying on the centre-table wherever we go—for it is a proof to us that good hearts and pleasant intellects are about us. She has not an enemy in the world, and could not possibly have one. When she dies her lovely spirit will pass, by a transition so natural and so easy, into its new and higher relations, that we doubt indeed whether she will herself at first be conscious of the change. Mrs. Child is no partisan, no arguer, no declaimer against abuses, nor suggester of new and startling theories; but her whole heart overflows into her works with an unbounded love for God and nature, and all true and beautiful things—and so evidently sincere and thorough is the abandonment of her devotion, that it imparts a tone to her least pretentious writings which fill the eyes with tears, and the heart with glowing happiness.

Conspicuous among the female writers of this country is Mrs. Kirkland, whose works, written when she resided at the West, burst upon the public several years ago with the promise of an extremely brilliant career for their gifted author. Since her removal to New York, she has either lost much of her inspiration, or occupied herself in other pursuits than those of literature; for, although we occasionally see her name, and read her effusions, yet the inimitable freshness, and spirit, and raciness, of those glorious prairie sketches in "A New Home—Who'll Follow?" seems to have faded from her brain and heart in the stifling atmosphere of the metropolis, as completely as the immaculate flavor of Knickerbocker's history disappeared from Irving's inkstand the moment he removed himself from the weird precincts of Sleepy Hollow. Mrs. Kirkland's characteristics, as indicated by her recent writings that we have seen, are a shrewd power of observation and description, and an inexhaustible common sense. Had she, however, fulfilled the promise of her earlier works, she would have risen to a height of popularity which it would have been difficult to measure.

We might extend and prolong the catalogue of our female writers, but not greatly nor profitably. In fact, although we have been as greatly favored as any other time or country in this respect, yet it must be confessed that female literature compares but poorly with the creative efforts of the other sex. Whether this is owing to the errors and falsities in our social institutions, or to an inherent inequality in the intellectual endowments of the two sexes, I shall not be bold enough to discuss.

My own private opinion of the matter, however, is, that women, being such exquisite poetry and works of art themselves, cannot be expected to reproduce themselves by the ordinary process of pen and ink, and other implements, by which the human brain manages to get rid of itself in the various departments and interests of creative effort. We should as soon expect a rose-bush to turn gardener, or a gold-finch ornithologist, as for those pretty flowers and sweet singing birds, the ladies, to do anything but be musical and beautiful. We think, in fact, that a woman transcends her manifest destiny in entering the rubbish-strewn arena of literature and art; and could we organize society strictly according to our own views, the sole employment of all womankind, throughout the universe, should be, to admire their pretty selves, and be adored by the men. Until this new and magnificent phase of society comes round, we devotedly raise our hat, and bid them adieu.

CHAPTER XV.

A NEW FIELD—A WORD ABOUT THE PAINTERS—NATIVE AND FOREIGN PAUPERS—FREE NEGROES—DESTINY OF THE BLACK RACE—CREATION OF NEW RACES—FINAL DESTINY OF THE GLOBE AND ITS INHABITANTS.

Native Mechanics and Laborers—Effects of Foreign Competition—Changes in the Current of Trade—The Commercial Inquisition—Mechanics—The Contract System—Disappearance of Certain Trades from the City—Female Labor—Emigrant Population—Duty of Society to its Helpless Members—The Firemen of New York—No. 14 in Broadway—A Frenchman's Description of the Firemen—The Quarrels and Amusements of Firemen—Good Move—Native Rowdies and Foreign Rumsellers—Pritchard's Trial—Firemen Militia—Duty of Society to Youthful Vagabonds—Slop Work—Remedy—Amusements of the Middle Million—Bowery—National—Franklin Museum—Burton's—Brougham's—Niblo's—Broadway—Christy's Minstrels—Balls and Dancing—The B'hoy on Sunday—On the Avenue—Reflections.

WE now take a bold plunge from the wealthy and professional classes of society into another world and another creation, almost among another race of beings; for the undeveloped, uneducated, unrefined, and, neces-

sarily, partly brutalized victim of labor is, in deed and in truth, a different being from the man of taste, refinement, and gratified aspirations. We had intended, before bidding adieu to the upper strata of society, to make some allusion to the other classes of professional life than the literary, but on second thought, we abandoned this idea—as well on account of the reader as ourselves. Every man and woman in the community is interested in every literary man and woman, while each individual and each family selects its own lawyer, its own doctor, and its own minister, and cares comparatively little about those of other people. It is true, the world of art should present a somewhat fruitful and profitable field of investigation; but artists are, as a class, so much more irritable than even scribblers, that we shall fain make the best of it by dismissing them with a word of approbation in the lump, avoiding all investigation or criticism upon their individual merits. In fact, the condition of the fine arts in this country, at the present time, is so eminently without nationality, without originality, without antecedents, and without well-defined features, that if I were to say only that which I think and feel about American art and American artists, I should make many unnecessary enemies, say many unnecessary cruel things, and incurably wound many susceptibilities; and, as I have no intention of saying anything in this book that I do not believe, I will even let the studios repose in their quiet and half mysterious solitude. Painters, besides, are a tribe of beings who seem scarcely to belong to society. A few of them, now and then, make their appearance in certain favored circles, but, generally, they live within themselves, and their social solaces are of a description too bizarre and doubtful to be recognized in any regular disquisition upon society. Let us, then, pay the hasty tribute of an exceptional word in favor of Durand, Mount, and Elliott, leave these narrow precincts, and direct our steps toward the broad and fruitful field of observation opened before us by the condition and destiny of the great middle working class.

From this point the character of our material will rapidly degenerate. The elegant will sink to the common-place, the common-place to the destitute and squalid, and misery and ignorance speedily find their inevitable ultimates—in licentiousness and crime. In this division of our work it is our intention to probe boldly and with honest hands the absolute and positive evils and their consequences which oppress this immense class of our population—to show truly those which are imposed upon them by others, as well as those which proceed from within themselves. Before we have finished this task it will have led us from the

palaces and saloons of our wealthy and accomplished aristocracy, to the dens and garrets of want and degradation.

In treating of the working classes in the metropolis, we must commence by making an immediate distinction, generally in disquisitions of this kind overlooked, as well as lost sight of in those statistics of crime and pauperism and charity which from official sources are given to the public. This distinction is one of birth-place, and recalls in all its depth and intensity the old Native American question, which by the ignorance, dishonesty, imbecility and selfishness of its managers was perverted from its high and holy mission and made the laughing-stock of the public. Yet the philosophy of that question contained the great idea necessary to explain, to understand, and to remedy the monstrous evils of society in the New World. Without keeping in view this great distinction, it is incredible to the large thinking mind that a government so free and little expensive to the labor of the country as ours—that a soil so prolific and a system of labor, competition, combination and reward so utterly unrestricted—should produce such wide-spread destitution and despair as we are about to lay bare in the heart of the capital of the western world. And it is strictly true that an inconceivably small portion of this misery is shared by the native born children of the American soil. In this immense city with its seventy thousand paupers and two millions and a half annually disbursed in public charity, I do not honestly believe there are fifty native born Americans who are indebted to public charity for their food or shelter. The moment we approach the darker and more revolting aspects of life in this metropolis, it is but a reproduction, line for line and feature for feature, in many cases, in all with but slight modifications, of the same phases of existence in London and other portions of the old world. I ought, however, to except from these remarks the free negro population of our city, which in everything wretched, hopeless and abominable, is infinitely worse than Jerrold, or Mayhew, or Dickens, or Sue, could possibly conceive; for, added to the disabilities of association and lack of education, the free negro, removed from the sole protection that has ever succeeded in rescuing him from starvation, sinks hopeless beneath that inferiority of blood and race implanted in his nature by God himself. Yes, there can be no doubt in the mind of any reasoning and rightly observing man, that in no part of the earth, under no institutions, however tyrannical or oppressive, under no system of inadequate reward or enormous taxation of labor that ever existed, has white human nature fallen by many, many degrees so low as the condition of the free blacks in New York, Philadelphia and

Boston ; while at the same time it is true that there never yet has been a peasantry and a laboring population of any race or color, who as a general thing enjoyed so comfortable a degree of existence, and were so free from destitution, vice and disorders, as the slave population of the South. These two grand facts I state here—not for the purpose of drawing from them inferences prejudicial to this or that political interest, nor to add one futile effort more to the thousands that have been made or that will ever be made with equal futility, to settle this point in political economy. The destiny of the black race in contact with the whites is a problem which can only work itself out to a satisfactory conclusion. As to my own belief—if there be any who possess a curiosity to know it—it is that the African race, although by its greater flexibility and power of adaptation to circumstances, it will for a long time remain in some species of contact with the whites, yet must eventually be absorbed or annihilated, as the red man has already almost been. I believe fully, as the result of the most careful and deeply interested studies, investigations and reflections upon the laws of the physiology of races, that not only will the African and the Indian tribes be eventually extirpated in the progress of humanity—not only will their fate be imitated by the yellow men and the Malays, and all other races at present known and recognized as inferior to the Caucasian, but that there are to appear on earth races of men as far superior to the present highest development of the Caucasian and Anglo-Saxon races, as they are to the other and meaner inhabitants of the earth. I look abroad upon this globe and find *progress* stamped as the character of its animal and vegetable productions. The condition of its geological, vegetable, animal and scientific developments and the physical and intellectual state of the races of mankind who inhabit it, all bear a continual and marvellous harmony, one with the other. Reasoning from the past, I look to the future history of our planet, and I see the earth disencumbered of its miasmatic marshes, its inaccessible mountains levelled to the grasp of the cultivator of the soil, its barren deserts blooming as the rose, and every noxious and poisonous weed, ore and exhalation departed for ever. When that time comes, the meteoric phenomena of the atmosphere and of the seasons, will have corresponded to this great and beneficent change. Death-dealing tempests and convulsions will no more sweep over the land and ocean ; pestilential winds will no more scatter death and horror among the millions of every clime and nation ; and the whole physical condition of those who fill this beautiful green globe, which God has given to man for his final and glorious habitation and inheritance, will utter but one

sweet and thrilling harmony with the divine goodness and glory of the Creator. At that time too will the human race have undergone a corresponding transfiguration. Murder and robbery, and oppression, and treachery, and ingratitude, and all the horrible train of evils that march wailing like furies in the train of a perverted love, will have disappeared from among mankind. Want, parent of every species of crime and outrage, that man has ever suffered at the hand of man, the cause too of those horrible evils to which woman has been so long compelled to submit, will no longer then exist, and with it will disappear those mean, contemptible and miserable motives now miscalled passions, that hurry a desperate, reckless and despairing world into every horrible excess. In these days, too, the physical and intellectual stature of mankind will have aggrandized itself to its original and celestial proportions, when God created man in his own image, and when he was but a little lower than the angels.

But, to leave these speculations, which will of course be dismissed among the idle dreams and fancies of the imagination—let us cast a look at the great problem of labor in the nineteenth century, as we find it actually existing in New York. As to a great majority of our American mechanics and laboring men, they are for the most part in what may be called a *comfortable* position, though now and then they feel the hand of distress weigh heavily upon them—chiefly, however, through the severe competition created by the immense number of emigrants, who stand ready at every corner to undertake every species of mechanical, or other labor, whether they understand it or not, and who of course will work for a mere pittance in comparison to any fair remuneration, as understood in our American scale of prices. Accustomed in their own country to live like pigs, they can stow themselves away into all sorts of holes and corners, and live on refuse, at a rate of wages upon which any decent white man would very surely, and very speedily starve. Thus they overrun every department of mechanical industry especially, like armies of locusts, and literally take the bread out of the mouths of native-born laborers. We do not say they are to blame for this. We only state the fact; and for proof that it is fact, we appeal to every man and woman in this city who depends upon the labor of the hands for subsistence.

An important change in the retail and smaller mercantile operations of the state is now gradually but visibly being effected. It is the concentration of capital and trade in each department into the hands of a few large dealers or contractors. This, like almost every other tendency of the present civilization, is the inverted aspect of a process of true

melioration. Concentration and combination are the secrets of the magnificent improvements which are to come upon the face of society ; but as at present directed and controlled, they are but the signs of oppression, and the great and rapidly-becoming insurmountable obstacle to success to all who start and struggle in life unaided by hereditary wealth or factitious circumstances. Formerly it was possible and common for young traders with four or five thousand dollars capital, to commence business in any department they preferred, and with ordinary caution, prudence and economy, to almost invariably succeed. But now we find the amount of capital necessary to procure even a remote chance of success rapidly enlarging ; and in a short time it will be impossible to found a mercantile establishment short of a fortune to invest as preliminary capital. The few large houses in every branch of trade are rapidly swallowing up and absorbing the smaller and younger ones around them, and it is already almost an utter impossibility for a young man without vast resources, and unlimited credit and acquaintance, to even obtain a show of success in the great and cruel game of mercantile competition. We are rapidly creating in our very midst, and unconsciously to all, even to themselves perhaps, a class of commercial barons, into whose hands will inevitably pass the entire control of the business and credit, and the very mercantile existence, of the whole trading community. In fact, to an incredible extent already is this so ; and hundreds of ambitious young men of small means, to whom the country and villages and smaller cities are still a free and practicable arena, annually hasten here to sink their capital, involve themselves, and crush hope out of their hearts, in the futile struggle for a foothold in the metropolis. Not contented with the gradual and natural formation of these gigantic monopolies, the leading houses in metropolitan trade, have in their employment an organized system of espionage, which, centered in New York, extends its ramifications to every city, village, and school district, in the Union. Spies are regularly employed by this institution to travel throughout the country, and secretly obtain precise information of the property, the associations, the business, the family, and the personal habits of every man engaged in trade. These data are transmitted to the office of the central inquisition in New York, and carefully recorded in secret ledgers, and books of reference—so that the innocent country-merchant who enters our palatial establishments of wholesale trade, is scanned by the reference partner through a hole in his private counting-room, and the reference books examined to the minutest detail of his credit, as he passes the counters loaded with the gorgeous products of skill and industry he has come to

examine. This system can scarcely be called other than infamous; and were it put in practice by any other than the selfish and insolent class who in reality govern and rule this age, and especially this country—the merchants—it would bring disgrace and incurable odium upon those who indulged in it. But now it is only regarded as evidence of the shrewdness and thoroughness of the commercial community, and no possible means of escaping it exist.

Something of a similar kind to the monopolizing tendency we have recorded above exists also in respect to the mechanical interests of the city—springing from an undue expansion and application of the contract system, by which the speculating contractor interposes between the mechanic and the real employer, and besides appropriating a heavy percentage upon the poor proceeds, nullifies the advantages of the lien-law, and leaves the poor workman utterly at the mercy of the heartless contractor, who, compelled by competition, to engage work for less than fair prices, must in turn oppress his workman to starvation point. This evil has long been desperately felt among the entire class of mechanics and workmen engaged in building; and instances of the most unmitigated scoundrelism on the part of these cold-blooded speculators on the bone, and muscle, and the sweat of the laborers' brow, every now and then transpire. But there is no remedy for these evils, save a total renovation and revolution in the system upon which work is done—and that of course is only the result of time. It will come as soon as it cannot help it; not before.

Another change in the mechanical labor of the city is in the gradual driving out, by want and starvation, of the smaller and handier kinds of mechanical labor, such as shoe-making, hat-making, &c., from the city into the adjacent country and villages. I have, in times past, had occasion to become familiar with the condition of these classes of mechanics, and I was astonished to learn the rapid change in the respect I have mentioned that was being effected among them. Large numbers of the more respectable and high-minded portion of the mechanics engaged in these occupations have been forced to quit the city and find home and employment in the large establishments founded in other places; while the great proportion of the work of this kind still done in the city is in the hands of foreign journeymen or botches, who work very badly for worse pay, and are grateful for any occupation that will save them and their families from absolute starvation. Of course, under these circumstances, all broad ideas of the practical reformation and elevation of the mechanical laboring classes must be out of the question. A transfusion

of material and element is constantly going on of an expensive and deteriorating character; and every year sees the great body of the journey-men mechanics of the city of New York considerably lower than its twelvemonth predecessor. This is a melancholy truth, but it is one which I know from practical observation, and one that cannot be successfully disputed. The last two years have added another element to this drain upon the vitality and vigor of our population, by withdrawing several thousands of our young men to California, leaving their families to become destitute and demoralized, and their places to be filled with an infinitely less valuable material than themselves.

The condition and state of development of the female portion of our working population is even less encouraging than that of the other sex. Those of them who are wives and mothers are continually tempted, by the insane spirit of social rivalry that pervades all classes, to go beyond their means in their manner of dress and living, and to neglect those strict lessons of prudence and economy, in the rearing of their families, which are alone fitted to their condition and the struggle in life for which they are destined. In respect to education, also, there are wide and lamentable deficiencies. Although our Free School system has done great good, and prevented incalculable ignorance and misery, yet there is that which it cannot do. It cannot infuse into the hearts and minds of fathers and mothers, in the lower walks of life, a proper sense of the necessity for education; and there is a constant struggle going on between the tendency of the rising generation to seek the light and the influence of a degraded and besotted parentage to corrupt and depress it, whose results are visible in the wide-spread deterioration in public morals, and an increasing catalogue of petty offences against the laws. These things, too, are confined almost exclusively to the foreign classes of our population. To an American family the ambition to possess knowledge, comfort, and respectability is inherent, while to the degraded thousands whom Europe annually throws upon our shores, the first and last thought is the groggery, the hospital, and the almshouse. It is a terrible food for any nation to digest, such an immense mass of moral and physical filth and putrefaction; yet the stomach of our body politic is so strong and healthy, and so young and fresh are all the sources of our public opinion and public morality, that the constant process of defilement going on in New York has little power to taint the other portions of the system; and it is even to be hoped that it will eventually purify itself, and so keep the nation from the consequences of the polluting contact to which it is subjected. In very truth, the emigrant population of

New York is one of the most terrible nuisances with which any people or any city were ever infested. Ignorant of the principles of our social and political institutions, unconscious of the dignity and responsibility that belong to the position of a free human agent, and unable to perform the slightest action, save from the impulse of a narrow and blind selfishness, they destroy and pervert all the blessings that naturally flow from our form of Government and transform them into curses, not only upon themselves but upon the community that is forced to cherish and sustain them. Miserable, miserable, indeed, is the condition of the foreign population of this great city! To go through the streets and along the wharves on either side of the Island, knee deep in filth and suffocating with poisonous odors, to examine the damp and gloomy cellars where so many hundreds of them are huddled together, writhing like loathsome reptiles, in a pestilential and noxious atmosphere, to witness the drunken revels and midnight orgies with which these unhappy wretches solace themselves for the starvation and shivering despair of their daily existence,—is to make one's self familiar with a gigantic moral phenomenon whose proportions strike terror to the soul, and whose shadow blots the sunshine of hope from the heart. Yes, in this glorious metropolis of the New World, so wealthy, so ambitious, so ostentatious, and so gay, nearly a hundred thousand human beings, steeped to the lips in every species of moral and physical degradation, live on from day to day and from year to year an ever satire upon our lofty pretensions of superiority to the rest of the world, and a terrible rebuke to the indifference and the errors of society that thus remorselessly refuses to recognize so many and such helpless of its members.

It is not our purpose in this place to go over again the details and the revolting particulars of the condition of this class of our population, nor to harrow up the sensibilities of our readers by pictures drawn from life, and observation of the state in which they pass their lives. All this has been done again and again; and yet the community seems as insensible as ever to the truth, and as incapable of entertaining any ideas pointing to a radical and thorough reform in the basis and principle of social existence—the only method from which any alleviation of these horrors is ever to be hoped for. Year after year our moralists and ministers preach against those terrible vices of theft, and robbery, and prostitution, which spring *directly* from want; and yet no one has the courage to stand up and proclaim the truth, that society itself has committed the first crime, and that it is the imperative duty of the community itself to provide for the comfort of every one of its members, and then to hold

them responsible for the faithful performance of their duties in the respect due to the rights and property of others. Thousands of men, women and children live in daily danger of starvation and perishing; and it is my positive belief that a great proportion of the petty crimes and of the immoralities of the lower class of society proceed directly from the dire urgency of cold and hunger. I have seen enough to convince me of this. I have witnessed scene after scene, of destitute and despairing virtue, pushed by starvation to the verge of crime, so oft repeated, that it leaves no doubt in my mind that if society would perform its first and fundamental duty to all its members, the crimes and the evils which most press upon us would almost wholly disappear. Intemperance is the grand medium and condition in which the bulk of crimes are committed. But intemperance is only the unnatural solace of these desperate and reckless individuals; for in it they forget for a time their sufferings and their sorrows. And licentiousness, too, is another direct offspring of this want of the common necessities of life, which it is the bounden duty of the community to supply to every individual. I do not believe there are at this moment ten women of the ten thousand publicly frail ones of New York, who, had they been secured an honorable and a decent existence, would have abandoned themselves to the life of infamy and shame they now pursue. Nor do I believe that the multitude of offences against property that stain our criminal calendars would exist were it not for the pinching want inflicted by hunger, and the discomfort and physical suffering of the families of criminals. Parental love is the strongest of human passions; and it is even stronger in the lower classes, who have so few things to love, and so few to love them, than in the higher. It is not difficult to believe that ignorant and half-starved men, goaded on by the sufferings and destitution of their families, should commit acts of reprisal against that society which has treated them and theirs with such palpable and unjust severity.

But let us refrain for still a moment from this extreme view of life, in its lower phases, and refresh ourselves with a draught of air from this open window, and a gleam of sunshine from the beautiful sky. Look how gay and lively is the street, how busy and eager the thousands who hurry by in swift procession! And see! there is a body of stalwart and sinewy men clad in leathern caps and red shirts, with pantaloons rolled up, or tucked into the tops of their cowhide boots, and all pulling lustily at an obstinate-looking vehicle, with strange and uncouth machinery and enginery all about it, and setting down low to the ground, with stout and thick-ribbed wheels that rattle and crack loudly as they roll over

the pavement. The machine is dragged by long ropes, to which are attached twenty or thirty men, and which is followed by twice as many boys of all sizes, sorts, and complexions. This is that wonder of civilization, a Fire Company; not such fire companies as exist in any other country on the face of the earth—uniformed, disciplined, under strict control, and drilled to well-understood regulations—but a volunteer fire company—in short, an American Fire Company. Its members all belong to some respectable business, and turn out entirely, *con amore*, and from the sheer love of excitement and that irrepressible flow of animal spirits, which is the uniform characteristic of the American. With no compensation whatever, and no expectation of reward, except the mere fun of the thing, and the glory of doing a good action, without a selfish motive, these brave and hardy men expose themselves to dangers and perils ten times as great as those that accompany the fiercest battle. Day or night, at a moment's warning, no matter what may be their engagements, or what claims may be asserting themselves upon their time and attention, they leave their occupations, their beds, the cradle of their sick child—anything, anybody—and at the sound of the alarm-bell, rush into the streets, clothing themselves in their uniform as they go along, and ready to work one hour, or fifty hours, as the case may be, in mud and water, under tumble-down walls, amid blazing rafters and crashing timbers, to save the property, perhaps the lives of people whom they know not, and never heard of, and who care and know nothing of them. Talk of the chivalry of the middle ages, and its sickly and sentimental whine! Why, it was nothing whatever to be compared to the chivalry of the American fireman, who, almost unconscious that he is doing an unusual thing, holds his whole life and existence at the order and service of those in whom he has no interest whatever, and from whom he expects no reward.

The firemen of New York are a social phenomenon well worth the studying; and if we mistake not, the most important and encouraging lessons are to be drawn from their life and example. Their efficient and practical existence, and that it is efficient and practical, no one we fancy will be disposed to deny, is a veritable and triumphant reply to those cavillers at the great social religion of Fourier, who contend that even could the distribution and organization of labor he provides for be effected, the motives would be wanting that would impel to action those groups devoted to the performance of dangerous and revolting duties. War, and a sacrifice of soldiers to a cause they know nothing of and care nothing for, is accounted for by these cavillers as the effect of discipline

and the fear of punishment. It may be that to some extent this is the case; although there can be no serious doubt that the latent sense of chivalry existing in every human heart, is at the bottom of the courage and devotion of soldiers. But in the case of the firemen the question is at once disincumbered of all these difficulties, and presents itself naked to our view. No inconvenience nor disability is incurred by the fireman who neglects his duties. No force operates upon him to induce him to engage in that dangerous occupation, and no hope of reward nor compensation continues him in the performance of its functions. If any human act can be clearly traced for its motives to the inherent love of glory and a chivalric devotion to the interests of others, which lie at the basis of all the noble qualities of humanity, it is the service performed for their fellowmen by the volunteer firemen—ill-requited and unacknowledged as are their countless acts of devotion and exposure.

We do not know that we could do a more interesting thing than to give in this place the estimate of our New York firemen, formed by an intelligent foreigner, one of the editors of the "Republican" who under the title of "*Esquisses à la Plume*," has given a series of graphic and entertaining pictures of life and character in New York, exhibiting great power of observation as well as lively fancy and an agreeable style. One of these sketches is under the title of "*Types du Bowery—le Pompier*."

"The American fireman, says our Paris philosopher, "differs essentially from his French namesake. They have but a single point of correspondence, the common object of their mission. As to the organization of their bodies and their individual physiology, there is radical difference. In France the fireman is recognized by his martial gait, by his uniform, and his helmet of polished brass. In New York, except when in actual service, the fireman wears a black dress, sometimes even a drab overcoat, and an umbrella—when it rains. The first is a soldier subject to a complete military discipline, and officered by men who belong to the ranks of the army. The second is a simple citizen, without moustachios, exercising voluntarily his benevolent functions upon the sounding of the tocsin that calls him to the field; free the remainder of the time, and owing no service nor obedience but to the chiefs of his company, who obtain their honors by election, and upon the strength of long services or of brilliant acts of courage and devotion. Here, one is a fireman when he does not wish to perform military nor jury duty. The American fireman inhabits, then, no particular barrack. He dwells everywhere, in every street, in every house, in every hotel. A clerk, a pastry cook, a poet, are all equally eligible as firemen, and man the pump merely as a

matter of taste and for the love of rendering service to humanity. What sacrifices and dangers are imposed upon them sometimes in the accomplishment of their service, and how shall we describe the risks and dangers they run, and the vexations and annoyances to which they are subjected!

"Thus, a young man is at the ball, in the midst of a fête resplendent with light and beautiful ladies. At the moment when he is about raising his foot with the lady of his love to mingle in the first measures of the polka, rich in prospective pressures of the hand and glances of love, behold, he is arrested all of a sudden; and with neck outstretched, listening to a mysterious noise, at which he reconducts his partner to her place, and hastens out of the saloon—but not without throwing a piteous regret upon the pleasures of the night. This young man perhaps had a boot that pinched his corns, or, perhaps, he found himself taken with a sudden indisposition? No—reassure yourself. It is a fireman, who has just heard, rising above the harmonious waves of sound from the orchestra, the alarm bell of the City Hall. He hurries to his domicile, if it is not too far off, dons his red flannel-shirt, his patent-leather cap; and behold him, a few minutes afterwards, working at the pump, or galloping in the traces, neither more nor less than an omnibus horse. The fire extinguished, he dresses himself anew, then goes to resume the thread of his night's amusement, and the peroration of a love speech of which he had not time to come to the conclusion.

"It must not be supposed that fires here are less quickly extinguished than under a different system. There is not perhaps in the world a more energetic, more prompt, more active organized fire department.

"For the rest, the title of fireman, honorable as it is, does not suffice to constitute here a regular position. It brings in nothing, pecuniarily speaking, and no one enjoys a rank in the community entitling him to write on his visiting card, 'Mr. Pillicoddy, fireman.' In France the fireman forms part of a *corps d'élite*. He is prized by the Government, which accords to him a high salary, and surrounds him with evidences of distinction. To conclude by a last trait, which relates to moral character—if the French fireman has known how to establish a universal reputation for gallantry—the oyster-women are there to bear witness of it—the American fireman might pass for being almost a savage.

"The firemen recruit themselves, as we have said, from all ranks of society. They are found not only in all the quarters of New York, but disseminated over the entire surface of the United States, with such inherent variations of physiognomy as are incident to the locality. Nowhere,

however, is the type more strongly defined, nor more distinctly colored, than in the Bowery. Let us then continue our studies in this quarter. It would be difficult at the first glance to recognize anything but a citizen in a fireman, because he carries no visible badge of his profession; but in the Bowery there exist, however, certain peculiarities, undistinguishable to a person not accustomed to see them, which reveal infallibly a member of this vast corporation. There are in this region a class of people who have in reality no other avowed profession. What name shall we give these? The word fireman is scarcely sufficient. It is necessary to add to it that of sportsman, in order to properly characterize them. The sporting fireman is in a certain circle a man of consideration. He plays an important part sometimes in the elections, and is both throne and oracle in the public-houses. He is a species of *fier-à-bras*, whose power is established by his mental and moral peculiarities on one side, and his brute force on the other. His feudal dominion extends over all those who are attached, directly or indirectly, to the fancy, and to the various kinds of *sport*. We must remark in passing the signification which is given to this word in New York. In France, and especially England, the sportsman is almost always a gentleman, who, for the employment of his fortune and leisure, occupies himself with horses, with the chase, like the gentleman of the middle ages. Here, save that there may be a few rich men who follow the European traditions, sport is for the most part a business—the business of those who have no business—and a means of speculation. One bets on a boxer, on a horse, on a card, or on a bull-dug. One gains or loses. This is play elevated to the rank of a profession; and this profession, like all others, has its degrees, its hierarchy—from the fashionable gamester, who scatters his gold with a hand elegantly gloved in white kid, and frequents the clubs of good society, to the vagabond who rattles the dice or shuffles the greasy cards in a low tavern; from the elegant horse-jockey who figures on the Centreville-course, to the buffoon who traffics in stolen dogs. But the mass of sportsmen are the hundreds of individuals of whom one recognizes figures that no language names, and who gather round certain haunts in the Bowery, and elsewhere—the bar-rooms, and other places of public-reunion. Of these one sees they are sportsmen, and it is well understood without further commentary, as when one says of another class, ‘they are doctors.’

“The sporting fireman naturally finds himself in all places where sporting affairs are carried on; at the Centreville-course, at the gymnasia, in the boxing-saloons, and, above all, in the sporting coffee-houses, where wagers are arranged, and matches made up.

"The physique of the sporting fireman is peculiar to himself, and we find in him even a certain brutal poetry which is his seal and stamp. He is rarely handsome, or, to speak more correctly, almost always he is literally ugly. His stature and carriage are striking, and his gait solid, yet elastic. He has great strength, and a spirit of grace in his movement. On his head (the hair of which is smoothed with soap in puffs below the ears, and in large ringlets around them, that which has given birth, we presume, to the word 'soaplock' as solely applied to this class) he wears a hat with a straight brim, and of the shape and fashion of a chimney-pot. The hat inclined over the eyes, leaves open to view the immense posterior of the occiput. Around the neck the hair is cut short, and resembles the mane of a certain animal who is scraped before being transformed to brushes, sausages and hams. Around his neck hangs, with a sort of coquettish negligence, a cravat of some color, red, yellow, or blue, the ends of which are arranged in flourishing spirals, and float like pennants on the wind. The collar opened, when collar there is, permits to be seen a muscular chest, where sun and whisky have traced their blushing imprint. A red flannel-shirt, fastened on the breast with large buttons, black or white, and pantaloons, secured around the waist with a band of leather; boots of strong leather worn over the pantaloons: such is in general the costume of the sporting fireman. Add to this bizarre costume the historical and necessary complement, the tobacco quid illuminating with fancy designs the margin of his mouth, and the picture is complete.

"The occupation, avowed and public, of these men, is firemen. As to gaming, which furnishes them with their real means of existence, they consider it merely as an accessory, an agreeable accomplishment, but an accomplishment by which they live.

"This class of individuals is more numerous than one would naturally suppose. There are in New York an entire class who have no other life. However unfavorable to morals may be such an existence, it is not necessary, therefore, to imagine that it excludes all good sentiments. The fireman is brave, adventurous, and in the ensemble of his character, notwithstanding the tendency towards vicious habits and debased instincts, possesses a certain elevation of soul which makes itself visible sometimes, and of which many examples might be cited. The gambling-house, the house of prostitution, the groggery, are the habitual sphere where he expends his active life; and it is not wonderful that such an existence should go far to extinguish all his noble faculties. But in the midst of this dissipation and demoralization, there are moments in which burns a pure generosity and a disinterested morality. It is only in part.

it is true. A brutality, carried sometimes almost to the point of cruelty, seems to be the foundation of his nature, although he is susceptible of devoted attachment and profound friendship. One circumstance goes far to neutralize the value of these generous instincts—and this is, that they are exercised too often on those who are unworthy of them, and are manifested almost always by acts of a puerility so exaggerated that the fact makes us forget the cause, and the action disqualifies us from appreciating the motive.

"Adjacent to the sphere of the sporting fireman we find another class of individuals, happily less numerous, to whom it would be difficult to give a decorous name if the American writers themselves had not resolved the difficulty by styling them "fancy firemen." These leave far behind them the first, who, although of questionable morality, are not directly nuisances to society. The fancy firemen have not even the speculations of play for a means of subsistence. They live one knows not how, sleeping one knows not where—and yet they live and sleep. When night descends upon the city, the fancy firemen set themselves at work, and you may see them circulating, seeking adventures, inundating the bar-rooms, insulting women, quarrelling among themselves, fighting, and making false alarms of fire, for the express purpose, in the language of their oratory, of getting up a muss—that is to say, a tumultuous scramble, in which they and their friends always find means to play a conspicuous part. With these men nothing is entitled to respect but the baton of the policeman. They are the froth that gathers and ferments in the popular quarters, the scourge of honest laborers, the nursery whence are recruited the pensioners of the Tombs, the philosopher's stone to the Chief of Police. The fancy men have an unknown origin. Like rivers whose sources have not yet been discovered, we only know whence they run—to the penitentiary. The family for them is a myth, and they seem to have been created, like pestiferous insects, from the miasma of the streets and gutters. Social mushrooms, they grow up, live, and die on the dunghill. They form, in the language of our friend, G. G. Foster, 'a regular cordon of rascality.'

"It is impossible to give a complete description of this tribe of equivocal firemen, for there is nothing definite concerning them but the vagabondage of their existence. In all the great cities they exist, and escape the eye of the observer for the very logical reason that they are seldom seen in the daytime. Nothing short of a general perturbation brings them to the surface. A political emeute, for example, or a fire; for in either of these cases they are enabled to inherit without discovery

some of the spoils and property of others. Here, fires being frequent, the fancy men have an occupation in some sort permanent, and for this reason doubtless it is that they are called "the men what run with the engine." This sympathy manifested by the fancy men for the fire engine, sometimes classes them in the ranks of firemen; but it would be treating them with far too much honor to suppose for an instant that they belong to that occupation. It is in fact the first to disown them. It possesses far too correct a sense of its own dignity and respect for honesty, not to repulse these miserable excrescences who endeavor to attach themselves to it. The sportsman himself does not tolerate the fancy man, except on conditions that he confines himself within legal limits. In despite of these parasitical hornets, for which they ought not to be considered responsible, the body of the firemen are unquestionably worthy, of great consideration; for they are composed, in an immense majority, of honest and laborious workmen, of clerks belonging to respectable establishments, often even of masters and proprietors of shops and stores. The sporting fireman himself, viewed only in his devotion to the public welfare, ought not to be excluded from this majority; for it is possible to gamble and yet to be a good citizen. However venturesome this assertion may seem, it is however, in the United States no less than elsewhere, a national trait, and frequently this daring and venturous spirit of speculation rises to the confines of sublimity.

"The firemen form an institution highly useful, highly moral, highly philanthropic, and those who belong to it are always ready at the first sound of the bell to expose their lives for the good of the community, employing in their voluntary mission a constant energy and a devotion often heroic, meriting the sympathies of all honest men and a fair place in public opinion."

These views of the firemen of New York, and of their excrescences and fungi, are in the main remarkably correct, and betray great intelligence and carefulness of observation. If the tone and spirit of this writer were emulated by the generality of foreigners who employ their pens upon the manners, customs, institutions and inhabitants of the United States, we should be much better known and much better respected abroad than we have at present any chance of being. There is no doubt that the great body of the New York firemen are, as stated by our French contemporary, honest, useful and educated men. Since the decay of our militia system, which has been regularly laughed out of existence as a ridiculous and useless humbug, the warlike and chivalrous spirit of the middle ages has concentrated itself in our fire companies; while as to this spirit among the more pretentious and aristocratic circles

of our population, it is enough to say that it does not exist. One of the distinguishing characteristics of the firemen is their great attachment and devotion to each other; and although they frequently indulge in fights and quarrels, and even establish hereditary hostilities that continue from year to year, yet their contests, even including brickbats and bloody noses, should be regarded strictly in the illustrations of their amusements. Their habits of exposure and reckless disregard of danger create in them a kind of savage necessity for rough play; and we have often imagined that the dainty little lap-dogs that run about on sunny afternoons in Union Square, must look upon the occasional encounters of the New Foundlanders and bull-dogs occurring on the outside of the railings with very much the same sort of shuddering as our effeminate ducks and dandies regard the bear's-play exercise of the firemen and the b'hoys. Indeed, the soul of the fire department is emulation, and to the free play of this passion we are indebted for the unparalleled and incredible efficiency and promptness, the unshrinking exposure and labor, that characterize its proceedings in so remarkable a manner. It is of course natural that sometimes this spirit of emulation should lead to excesses; but the spirit of rowdyism has never in New York been permitted to obtain a permanent influence upon our fire department. And although it is now and then disgraced by the deeds of the fancy men and ruffians who endeavor on all occasions to link themselves with it, and clothe their evil deeds with the sanction of its name, yet as a general thing, the respectability and honesty of the department cannot be questioned.

The firemen of Williamsburg some two years ago made a movement, under the authority and patronage of the city government, which demands our particular notice, and is entirely in accordance with the views entertained and advocated in this work. They started the project of building a large and handsome edifice to be entitled the "Fireman's Hall," to be furnished with rooms for lecturing, for scientific experiments, for meeting of the various companies, drill-rooms and reading rooms, a dancing hall and concert rooms, and in short, every means for the improvement and amusement of the firemen, at present accessible only partially and under disadvantageous circumstances, and so not used at all. Nothing can be more important than this movement, if we look at it not merely for itself, but as an indication of what is to come. It is a movement which ought to be and must be sooner or later extended to every other craft and profession. Nothing is so much needed at the present moment as the developing and elevating of the minds of the members of our various mechanical professions, and the establishing of a refined and noble ambition for excelling, not only in the material and

physical labors of their occupation, but in the intelligence, morality and intellectual usefulness of the members. We would hold up both our hands to see the creation of an institution which should be the intellectual counterpart of the glass palace of the London World's Fair.

It is the one great and most discouraging fact of the present age, that in the insane rush for physical, material and mechanical development, that mental and spiritual emulation which can alone ripen the heart, illuminate the soul, and purify society of its monstrous horrors, has been almost wholly neglected. To this is owing the existence of such large and unmanageable masses of low and ignorant ruffianism, of which our Parisian friend has just been speaking. The number and character of the rowdy and vagabond population of New York, to those who only go easily through life, and cast their eyes but upon the surface of things around them, is quite incredible. Hundreds and even thousands of them go nightly prowling about the city, or gathering in the vilest and most loathsome dens of gambling, theft and prostitution in wretched quarters of the town, congregating in low groggeries and continually engaged in contriving schemes and adventures of depredation upon the property or the security of society. The two conspicuous antitheses of this phase in New York life are the fancy men of whom we have been speaking, and the foreigners, chiefly Dutch and Irish, who keep small groceries and low grog-shops in the squalid precincts of the city. The fancy men, to our disgrace be it spoken—and we will as honestly tell the truth about our own citizens as of foreigners—are almost exclusively native-born Americans. Reared in complete idleness and utter ignorance, they are not a whit more elevated in character and motive than the savages of the wilderness. They are continually in want, because they have no idea of earning anything by work; and when they make a lucky haul by stealing at a fire or swindling some greenhorn or drunken stranger, they hasten to expend the product to the last cent in the Dutch grogery or the negro brothel, and the next morning are as destitute as ever. Then they go prowling about among the haunts where they spent their money, while a vague sense of savage justice leads them to think it no more than right that those who have received all their money for rotten whisky and poisoned brandy, now that it is gone, should continue to furnish them with those delightful commodities for nothing. But the Dutchman is like a sensitive plant—the moment he feels the approach of a customer without money, he instinctively closes his till, stops up his bottles and bungs his barrels. His hypocritical politeness, with which he dealt out the poison so long as the b'hoy had money, has vanished, and with a cold and sourkrout look, he tells him to go about his busi-

ness. This is touching the b'hoy in a tender point. He would not mind being refused credit; but to be "sassed" by the —— Dutch son of a —— is more than he can bear! All the b'hoy and all the real native American is at once roused in his whole being. He meditates seriously how he may gratify his thirst for revenge and rot-gut; and gathering his chums together, all of whom have at various times and in various places suffered the same indignity, a plan is set on foot to redeem the honor of the native American name, and revenge themselves upon the whole race of bloody foreigners. This leads to the nightly enactment of scenes of violence and rowdyism, terminated by the intervention of the police, but more frequently permitted, by the proverbial supineness of those guardians of the public tranquillity, to proceed to riot, battery and bloodshed; and our criminal records are not wanting in evidences that this foul conspiracy abainst public order, promoted by the natural antagonism of these despicable foreign rumsellers, and atrocious native blackguards, leads frequently to homicide and murder. Laws have been found utterly inefficient to check this rampant evil, and an illustration of the details of all that we have been indicating in these general terms is afforded by the trial of Pritchard, who murdered a Dutchman in cold blood because he would not trust him for rum. Judge Edmonds, with that frank sincerity and candor which has begun to characterize our bench since the election of judges by the people, exerted himself to the utmost to have the law carried out in its manifest and just meaning, but in vain. So precious is regarded human life by the enlightened sense of the nineteenth century, that even the breath of a criminal must not be stopt by a jury, save under circumstances of some peculiar atrocity; and the observation of Judge Edmonds, that he was forced to rank himself among the opponents of capital punishment, if for no other reason than because it was impossible to induce juries to inflict the pain of death, is a striking and irresistible argument for the abolition of the gallows, and the total and radical revolution in our whole system of criminal jurisprudence.

We forgot to mention in the proper place an important function performed by our corps of regular firemen, that of a volunteer militia. If it were possible to imagine a series of events which would again bring into request the arms of our citizens, for defense against the aggressions of a foreign invader, it would not be possible more thoroughly, promptly and efficiently, to meet the exigencies of such a case than by the outpouring of our brave and hardy fire companies, every one of which is also a military company, and under a regular and thorough system of military drill and tactics. A continuous alarm of the fire-bell of the City

Hall would in thirty minutes gather an army of dauntless and herculean citizen soldiers, who would defend our coast against all the armed hosts that could be thrown upon it by all the powers of Europe—but this consideration is of little worth to us, for we do not believe in the remote possibility of any such event. It would greatly please and delight us if we could see this gallant spirit of daring and emulation in submission to general toil and hardship, when not required in the extinguishment of fires, diverted to some of the innumerable grand and ennobling purposes of physical improvement of which the age is so greatly in need.

We must not dismiss the subject of the firemen without alluding to the youths and boys, five hundred of whom are at this moment rushing tumultuously along behind the fire procession, and whose faces, habiliments and general carriage, denote them too truly the inevitable followers and emulators of the older vagabonds we have been trying to characterize. There cannot be on the earth another sadder nor more melancholy sight than that of these multitudes of prematurely barbarized and brutalized youths, growing up in idleness, depravity and vagabondage, throughout the city. Not only they themselves are objects of our keenest commiseration, but the inevitable influence of such masses of young, fermenting and active depravity, yearly growing up to manhood, and thrown into the great arena of metropolitan life, is a phenomenon that inspires the moralist and the philanthropist with despair. Oh! when will society grasp this mighty evil, and extinguish it? When will it see how feeble and futile are all its miserable expedients, its almshouses, its pauper institutions of emigrant out-door charity, its Blackwell's Island, its farm schools, its asylums and its penitentiaries? When will the scales fall from the eyes of those who blindly lead a blind civilization staggering to its death? When will it be seen that these poor beings, the corrupt leaven that ferments the whole body politic with disease and crime, are composed of noble and holy souls, and spirits like unto other men, and that, from whatever cause they have grown thus helpless amid the living death that surrounds them, they are entitled to claim of the great human family, of which they are the most unfortunate members, that protection from themselves, that escape from want and ignorance and a horrible and hopeless existence, which is the birthright of every son and daughter of humanity? When will the community learn that it is the community itself who commits the first crime, and that the vile deeds and terrible destinies of these wretched beings are but the inevitable retribution for its own awful neglect of its fundamental duties? How miserably inadequate to the good to be accomplished are

all the means by which society feebly attempts to reconcile itself with its aspirations, and harmonize its attributes with its destiny!

Let us imagine for a moment a sum of money equal to that annually consumed by either of those worse than useless institutions, the army and navy of the United States, and let this sum be appropriated to the establishment of schools, farms and workshops united, affording adequate means of instruction, employment and amusement suited to every taste, every condition and every capacity of the young. Let the law of this institution be that every species of instruction in every department shall be at all times going on, and that there shall be no restraint whatever upon the inmates as to the hours of their coming and going, or of the occupations, studies, pursuits and employments, in which they wish to engage themselves. Let there be no caprice nor inclination except indecorum, which cannot be unrestrictedly and at the moment indulged, and let the only punishment for even indecorum or disorder, be exclusion. The educational department of this institution should include the languages and the common branches, and the thorough and complete study and practice of all the fine arts, music, architecture, painting, sculpture, the science of chemistry in all its infinite and beautiful ramifications, natural history, with practical illustrations and examples, book-keeping, composition, eloquence. Every inmate should be entirely at liberty to go from any one of these employments to any other of them at any hour he liked, and to change as often as the inclination seized him; or to leave altogether the school-rooms, and to visit the shops of the mechanics, where every species of mechanical labor, of invention, of machinery, is taught and perfected. After wearying himself here, let the eager pupil either resort to the playground, the gymnasium or the riding-school, for a new excitement, or to the garden and the fields for the study and practice of practical agriculture and botany, or the gratification of some peculiar taste in the cultivation of a particular flower or fruit, or the adornment of a favorite field. When mind and body were thus harmoniously cultivated, strengthened and developed, by a round of occupations and employments, each spontaneous, and all strengthening and delightful, let there be opportunities for these young pupils of humanity to indulge in unrestricted social intercourse, or resort to the diviner pleasures of music or the drama heard in their perfection, or the more silent teachings of the gallery of statuary and painting, where the great lessons of the immortal beautiful, raying from the warm-colored painting, or the life-like statuary, imprint themselves in the colors of happiness for ever in the heart and the understanding. Let us imagine a life like this for these deformed and miserable young wretches, who

haunt the lanes and by-ways, and courts and cellars of the metropolis, living upon filth, and imbibing vice, disease and immorality, from the cradle to the grave; and what would be the result? Think you that under regulations like these, our Tombs, our Blackwell's Island, our hospitals and our penitentiaries would not speedily become diverted to more satisfactory, and more beautiful purposes? Nay, our very City Hall itself, the home of courts and lawyers, would become illuminated with a new spirit, and its spacious halls and chambers resound to the refining language of art, literature and science, while it would exhale around it an atmosphere of moral purity and refinement, that would extend like circles in the water to the remotest bounds of public sentiment.

Under such a state of existence as this, can we imagine that any would grow up willful, vicious, ignorant, and polluted? No; most truly we cannot imagine such a thing; if there be those acrid, envious, and embittered souls who can, it is not for them we hope and write. It is not for them that these prophecies of what will be are recorded.

The one great objection among rational minds to a scheme like this, is the unfounded charge of inherent idleness brought against humanity. Well, let those who choose be idle; or let them do nothing but play. They would soon find that play was the most irksome of all employments. While all round them were emulous of useful occupations and of distinguishing themselves in profitable pursuits, how long would it be before their ambition to mingle in the exciting strife, everywhere going on around, would, in turn, become excited? Emulation is one of the eternal laws of human existence. The other law, equally universal and equally eternal, is that of physical activity. Every human being feels a constant impulse to surpass somebody, and to be employed. The cause of idleness, and of the irksomeness of profitable labor is, that now-a-days, by our present system, the great majority of those who labor are confined perpetually to one kind of work, which becomes tiresome and monotonous to an inexpressible degree; and in addition to this, they are so overworked, until the natural spring and elasticity of their bodies are over-tasked and over-wrought, that all kinds of exertion become abhorrent and repulsive. This it is that has brought upon mankind the cruel and most unjust charge of idleness. It is impossible for human beings to be idle; and it is because so many thousands are compelled to do that which they dislike, or are prevented from doing that which they would, that such horrible disturbance between recreation and labor, between activity and repose, is continually sending its moral thunder storms into the atmosphere of life. If every one had the privilege and the means of laboring at what he liked, and changing his occupations when he would,

there would be more than enough work performed to provide in abundant luxury every species of product required by all, and that, too, at a rate and proportion of active labor trifling in comparison to the terrible taxations at present imposed upon the working and professional classes, and which, in fact, in a healthy condition of life and society such as this, would produce nothing but the mere and necessary spontaneous exertion of the frame.

One of the first necessities for lifting the laboring class from their present degraded and degrading position is provision for their innocent and profitable recreation. As a means of this, the Williamsburg movement, although small and comparatively insignificant of itself, is clearly in the right direction; and we fervently hope that it will be not only speedily carried out, but emulated and surpassed in our own city. The dedication of such an institution would be to us an imposing, solemn, yet encouraging and hopeful occasion.

Meanwhile, and during the period necessary for any new and good idea to take root in the soil of this society, which so spontaneously produces every worthless and bitter weed, we will point the attention of all Christian employers to one of the sorest and closest evils under which thousands of our poor journeyman mechanics are now laboring,—we allude to that accursed system of slop-work, so thoroughly exposed in the recent investigations of Mr. Mayhew, in the "Morning Chronicle," and which, amidst certain kinds of occupations, prevail proportionally to as great an extent in this city as in London. By this nefarious traffic in the labor of those who, at best, can earn but the barest subsistence by the most continuous and exhausting toil, whole classes of heartless speculators, or, as they are called among the tailors, "sweaters," are enabled to realize large sums weekly—absolutely plucked from the miserable earnings of the workmen themselves! It is only an extension and ramification of the detestable contract-system, by which a sharper undertakes to perform a certain amount of work for a trifle lower than the usual rates, and then farms it out to the most needy, miserable, and spiritless workmen he can find, carrying competition to its lowest and most wretched extent, and thus enabling himself to pocket from the contract a large slice of the entire sum. Thus not only are the workmen and workwomen prevented from approaching directly the consumers of what they produce, but they are not even permitted to deal directly with the proprietor or master workman who employs them. Sometimes even the sweater himself employs under-sweaters, who, in turn, must make their profits from the job; and so, in the end, the at first inadequate payment given for the work is taxed, first by the master-workman for his profits and the

support of his splendid shop and his elegant and fashionable family up town; next, for the greedy profit of the remorseless shaver and sharper; and then again, for one or two, and sometimes three, of his underlings. In such a state of things as this—an absolutely dishonest and fraudulent appropriation of the earnings of the workmen—it is incredible that the workman himself can live at all; and when we reflect that this abominable system, this monstrous outrage upon every decent principle and teaching of humanity, pervades the whole classes of labor and feeds upon entire trades and crafts, we can no longer wonder at the wretchedness, the dishonesty, the intemperance, and the depravity in which the lower classes of our working population are grovelling. Here, again, in our own city, interposes the shapeless horror of foreign immigration. It is to the ignorant and poor-spirited foreign population that the sweater of every kind takes his labor to be performed. With the assurance of ignorance and despair, they eagerly undertake to do any kind of work for any price; so that gradually, although customers complain, and the public's half-made garments are falling from their backs, the work is taken from the hands of the educated and thoroughly-trained journeymen—whose honorable spirit leads them rather to starve than to disgrace their trade and their humanity—and given to these wretched helots and paupers, who not only burden beyond endurance the public charity of the country, but snatch the work and fair recompense of toil, in the gift of the community, from the hands and mouths of the honest and deserving.

But this is by no means a solitary evil in our present system of work and reward; it is but one fact in a whole history of injustice and wrong—a single phenomenon of a world of ill. The whole idea of the proper distribution of rewards for different kinds of labor is completely inverted; and those kinds of labor and occupation, pleasant, delightful, and instructive in themselves, and which impart a positive pleasure to their doers, are rewarded with the highest and almost limitless compensations; while those suffering and humble individuals who perform the arduous, the exhausting, the injurious, and the repulsive tasks of society—and which, be it remembered, *must* be performed if society would hold itself together—are deprived of all respect and honor for their heroic labors, and fobbed off with a measure of reward and compensation so mean and contemptible, as scarcely to furnish them with the most common necessities of a miserable life. Is it not a self-evident, natural law of labor and compensation, that those kinds of service which require the greatest expenditure of strength, the greatest sacrifice of feeling, of comfort, or of health, should receive the highest reward?—while those who

labor only in gay and smiling fields, surrounded with aromatic flowers, and cheered by an ever-present sunshine, should be content with the delights of their existence, their immunity from severe compulsory toil, and the more perfect development of their bodies and spirits, wholly unattainable by the orders of workmen, upon whose illy-requited exertions they live and prosper? Ought not, in strict justice, he who drains our marshes, cleanses the *cloacæ* of great cities, builds our railroads and our canals, performs the menial offices of our households and prisons—ought he not really to deserve a higher reward than he who busies himself with some graceful occupation that but agreeably employs his time, and furnishes him only the natural exercise of body and mind required by the common law of his existence? Surely, surely this is but plain truth and common sense; yet so perverted have become all the ideas respecting the rights and justice of labor, that it will, doubtless, by a majority of the intelligent and respectable persons who peruse these pages, be pished and pshawed at as a ridiculous and impracticable innovation.

But in no department of human labor has the doctrine of a false and unnatural distribution of its rewards been carried so far as in respect to the labor of women. On any fair, manly, and decent scale of estimate, the relative value of services performed, the labor of woman, and the services she gives us in every condition, every rank, and every circumstance of life, are at all times and on all occasions entitled to the highest honors and rewards that society has to bestow. Not more directly is the embryo in the mother's womb indebted to the cares and sufferings of woman for its entrance into the world, than is the whole life of man, from the cradle to the coffin, wholly dependent upon the cares and sufferings of these same beings. And yet in every department of labor, in every situation of life, the work of woman is treated as a miserable joke, and mocked with the merest tithe of a just reward. If we look beyond the tenderer and more indispensable offices of the mother or the wife, the nurse, and the instructor of infancy, to those labors performed by the thousands of women in the community, compelled to maintain themselves by the work of their fingers, we shall find the same principle prevailing. The man who carries bricks upon his shoulder, or assists in any other of the lowest occupations of life, receives four or five times the pay awarded to the woman who fashions our garments, or keeps in order our dwellings, or performs any of those important and indispensable services of which alone her sex is capable. This is a wrong and injustice so flagrant and so palpable, that it seems impossible to contemplate its permanent existence without imputing to the heart of man an inherent love

of oppression, and a corrupt and dishonest selfishness. By what right, save the barbarian right of brutal strength, has the community to impose such terms of recompense upon the labor of woman, that, deprived of the assistance and protection of husband or male protector, let her do what she will she can but be a pauper and a beggar, and has but one means left to provide her with a few years' exemption from the cruel law of this Christian world—the sale of her chastity, and the defilement of her beautiful and immortal spirit? It would seem that no legislator could look at these facts, and reflect upon their bearings and consequences for a single moment, without taking a solemn resolution to exert himself instantly and perseveringly for the remedy of so great, so cruel, so outrageous a wrong; and yet, year after year, and cycle after cycle, the dread system moves on, crushing thousands of joyous, tender, and loving creatures, made to adorn, and perfume, and glorify this dreary and gloomy society, and confirming in the hearts of mankind that frightful indifference to the rights of women, and that gloating anticipation of the shames to which they are driven, which, it would seem, could belong only to a malignant demon. There is a frightful reality, under these circumstances, in the suspicion that man, by the common and devilish instinct, which he dares not own to himself, keeps woman the debased and helpless slave she is, that he may the more easily prey upon her virtue, and revel in the debauchery to which starvation and absolute want so continually impel her. Looked at from this point of view, the whole question of prostitution, and the means of its prevention, assumes a new and startling aspect, and one which it is the sacred duty of every good man and every good woman to examine boldly and discuss profoundly. At the bottom of all these monstrous evils some great and apparent duty must, in the agitations of the present epoch in the moral world, soon become patent; and unless the race of mankind is inherently and irrevocably bad, and unless the Devil, and not God, bears sway throughout this universe, society will, ere long, begin to put itself in an attitude to see that its duty is faithfully and honorably fulfilled.

As to the immediate redress for the most pressing evils under which the laboring and producing classes are suffering, all measures looking in that direction must, as a first and primary necessity, be extremely gradual in their operation; for although the class of those who think and reason only from what they wish, and seek to transport the world from wrong to right, from misery to happiness, by a single effort of their imaginations, is slowly on the increase, especially in this country, yet they are still far too insignificant a portion of the mass and momentum of public opinion to have a right to expect wide and important revolutions to be

effected in the well-settled evils and abuses of living and practical interests, save by small and low progress. Without expending too much time and care, therefore, in the discussion of broad principles or collateral issues, that which the real well wishers of society have to do at the present moment is to advocate a moderate and amicable expression of interests between the producers and the capitalists; to endeavor to establish a spirit of union and combination among the members of each trade or craft, which, without being oppressive, insolent or over-exacting toward honorable employers, shall at the same time form an efficient protection against the encroachments and the frauds, the tyranny and the oppressions of dishonest and heartless speculators. Progress, even in this small way, must unavoidably be slow, and this is owing quite as much to the narrowness, the jealousy and the selfishness of the working ranks themselves, as to the injustice and indifference of employers. Indeed, I am not certain that the reform does not work fastest among employers and capitalists themselves; for at the rate things are going on they must see that a few years must inevitably deteriorate the working interests so as to drag the whole world of industry on this side of the water down to the same level it occupies in Europe.

Among the workmen themselves, however, there has been, during the last few years, a marked and encouraging improvement in their tone of thought and mode of action. In several trades efficient movements have already been commenced, and are in some cases in practical operation, by which the journeymen have associated themselves and their little capital together and established a shop through which they put themselves in direct connection with the consumers. This is, after all, the only certain, the only advisable method by which the working men can safely improve their condition, and still retain the advantages they at present possess. This is a movement which cannot justly call out opposition nor hostility from any quarter; and all that is required is industry, moderation, temperance and promptness in their dealings with the public, to enable associations of this nature in any branch of mechanical business whatever to successfully compete with the very best establishments conducted by capitalists in the old way. By an intelligent perseverance in this course eventually to drive these establishments completely from the market. If the fundamental qualities which everywhere create success, industry, temperance, intelligence and economy, could at one moment descend into the heart of every journeyman in New York, that would be the moment of the regeneration of the whole class. Workshops and stores, supplied and conducted by the journeymen themselves, could afford to turn out better work and at cheaper

prices than any monopoly establishments whatever, conducted by capitalists and managed on the slop-shop or sweating system. This is a truth the importance of which is not sufficiently considered by the working classes themselves. It is but another illustration of the eternal law of success and happiness which God has established throughout his entire universe. It is upon the inherent character and the intrinsic deeds of the being himself that his destiny immediately and always depends ; and the very moment that the intelligence of the working classes has been raised to that point that they can see this simple, plain, practical question in its full importance and all its bearings, they may begin at once to create their own destinies and escape peaceably and without the power of any man to obstruct or oppose them, from all the disabilities, from all the injustice, from all the suffering, all the misery which have heretofore been inflicted upon them. Study it well, examine it in every light, consider all its collateral branches, its ramifications through the great interests of society, and you can come but to this one conclusion—that the moment the working classes have the resolution, the stability and the character to put themselves in direct connection with those who consume and pay for the products of their toil, that moment they are in fact and deed regenerated and disenthralled. After that, if they go astray or sink again beneath the temptations of capital or the illusions of idleness and intemperance, upon their own heads and the heads of their posterity for ever, will be the curse of so unnatural a crime !

We have now to cast a hasty but instructive glance upon a branch of our subject not less interesting than any we have yet considered. We mean the amusements of the laboring classes. It is in this respect that the widest difference is recognized between the laborers, both male and female, of this country and Europe. There, theatricals, concerts and other reputable and decent public amusements, are almost inaccessible to the great body of the working classes. The prices of admission to places of public entertainment, although not apparently very greatly higher than with us, are yet, on account of the scarcity of money among the lower classes, and the immense disparities of the wages of labor, sufficient to place these resorts beyond the reach of all save the few fortunate ones who live upon their incomes. Day and week labor in London can rarely furnish the opportunity to the laborer to visit, either alone or with his family, a place of public amusement. Perhaps once or twice a year, by way of a great holiday, he may manage to visit some wretched minor theatre or peep-show ; but as a general thing they are wholly deprived of the refining influence of decent public amusements, and for all their recreations, all their pastimes, all their solace from

hunger, pain, despair and gloomy discontent, there exists but one terrible resort—the gin shop. The consequence of this is a physical and mental deterioration too frightful to contemplate, and which, as we may too well see from the wretched and rickety specimens of humanity daily being vomited upon our shores, leads the populations of Europe rapidly toward a *cretinism*, involving the destruction and decay of entire races.

Here, however, the case is entirely different. So numerous, and for the most part, well conducted are our places of public amusement, our concert-rooms, our dancing-saloons, and general miscellaneous resorts, that however poor may be the condition of an American family, or however inadequate the reward its members receive for their labor, they manage to be regular visitants two or three times every week to some place of public amusement, where they can innocently forget their cares and troubles, and gaily laugh over the mirthful productions of the comic muse in some one or other of her grotesque maskings. A careful observation and study of the different places of amusement of this kind, would be of itself an interesting and instructive volume; for here at various times you might catch types well defined and perfectly developed, of every class of men, women and children in the vast lower stratum of our population. But we can here only glance for a moment at these establishments, and indicate by a few hasty touches the leading characteristics of each.

The largest and most permanently popular place of public amusement in the city has been, time out of mind, the Bowery Theatre; and although we are accustomed to connect with the name of this establishment, peanuts, red woollen-shirts, tobacco chewing, and rowdyism, with its trowsers tucked into its boots, yet, in point of fact, the Bowery stage would compare favorably as to the strength and talent of its performers with any other theatrical establishment in the country. It is true that the actors and actresses there are apt to acquire a style a little broader and stronger marked than might be acceptable to the laws of a fastidious criticism; but they are never dull, never wanting in a certain strength and naturalness of execution and conception very grateful to the habitué of the popular humdrumities of more fashionable concerns. The Bowery is now the only theatre in the city about which cluster any portion of those hereditary glories and associations that rendered it dearer to the amateur and lover of the drama. Here, Malibran made first a name and reputation, which afterwards overspread and enthralled the whole world with its power and magnificence. Here, Kean, and Cook, and Hamblin, and Forrest, won their laurels. Here Scott and Adams narrowly escaped becoming the greatest among their rivals; and here the popular heart

has often thrilled and palpitated beneath the magnetic and electric conceptions of Mrs. Shaw, the Siddons of the stage, without compeer or competitor. As to melo-drama and spectacle, they have been carried to a point at this theatre never approached by any other establishment in America; and even now, if we would enjoy a real old-fashioned evening at the theatre, there is no house to which we would sooner wend our way than the old Bowery.

But the audience—ah! there's a picture! I think I see them now, as they loomed upon my delighted vision last Christmas evening. The house was crammed like a sausage in gallery and lobby, in pit and punch-room, there was not room to poke your nose, or even had you succeeded in inserting it, the perfume there was not as agreeable as that you would not have willingly withdrawn it again, especially, dear reader, if you should happen to be afflicted with a nose at all sensitive. For our part we always feel on these occasions in the same happy humor as the fox at the lion's levée—we have a cold, and cannot smell. The pit is on fire with red flannel, and the incessant and enormous consumption of peanuts is no bad imitation of the crackling of the flames. The strong points of the actor are brought out and applauded like the happy hits in a political speech. Every time our friend Scott strides across the stage, and strikes one of those terrific attitudes, such as Praxiteles nor the sculptor of the Laocoon never conceived in his wildest fancies, a shout of approbation rises from the joyous pit. "Hi, hi! Go it my Scott!" "That's the ticket!" "Ain't he some!" accompanied by yellings, whistlings, hootings of indescribable and inconceivable descriptions, resound on all sides—

" And galleries answer from their tipsy crowd,
Back to the joyous pit, that calls to them aloud."

Struggling our way through the lobby, we overhear the following dialogue, which is characteristic enough to give a truthful idea of the tone and atmosphere of the entire house in front of the foot-lights: "Helloa Bill, your eyes, how are you?" says one of the b'hoys to his friend, whom he encounters in the crowd, at the same time raising his herculean hand above the other's head, and crushing his hat down over his eyes and ears. The other sputters, and chokes, and struggles, and at last gets his head out of his hat; and, hitting his friend a tunk in the ribs without being at all discomposed or out of humor, says, "pretty well, — — you! how are you? Is Lize along?" "Yes. Your gal here?" says the other. "Yes, in coorse, she ain't nothin shorter," replies the first. "Well, then spose we go and saloon our women!"

The dress circle is occupied by the more quiet and respectable families and children of the east end of the city, and with the exception of the flaming conspicuousness of the dress and accoutrements of the ladies, the prevalence of children of all sorts and sizes, and the circulation of lemonade, candy and oranges, and other refreshments, around the circle between the acts, you would not know but you were in ever so fashionable an establishment. The upper tiers and galleries are a bad and dreadful region. They are filled with rowdies, fancy men, working girls of doubtful reputation, and, last of all, the lower species of public prostitutes, accompanied by their "lovyers," or such victims as they have been able to pick up. The central point of this stratum is the punch-room, where a continual flood of poisoned brandy, rum and whisky, is poured down the reeking throats of these desperate wretches; until steam being up to the proper point, they take their departure one by one, to the haunts of crime, debauchery and robbery, whence they issued at nightfall like broods of dark ill-omened birds. This is a picture that can never be adequately described, and the consideration of which in all its revolting realities must work a thorough and effectual cure to every tendency to licentiousness and drunkenness in every susceptible and decent nature. Had we a son whose firmness of moral character we feared or doubted, we should want nothing better to confirm him in habits of decency, cleanliness and temperance, than a few visits to these indescribably disgusting haunts of human wretchedness.

What we have said of the Bowery, will do, with very slight modifications, for the National Theatre, which is conducted on a smaller scale but with great industry and tact. Its frequenters are very nearly the same class with those at the Bowery, with the exception that the inmates of the dress circle are a majority of them Jews and Jewesses. You may see here a greater display of the peculiar lineaments of Jewish female beauty than at any other place in the city.

Between the Bowery and the National is an establishment now known as the Franklin Museum, to which we are sorry to say hundreds of people in that quarter of the city, and indeed a few obscene old lechers from other portions and ranks of society, are nightly visitants. It is here that these disgusting exhibitions known as "model artists" may be seen in all their uncovered pruriency, and shocking indecency. It is incredible that anything short of goats and satyrs should find such obscene exhibitions of bandy-legged, flabby-breasted and lank deformity enticing; yet it is certainly true that hundreds of men who wear decent clothes, and have all the external appearance of respectability, go nightly to gloat

over these disgusting exhibitions. For such, we should imagine, there was no hope.

Another favorite and very crowded resort of the better portion of the middle ranks is Burton's Theatre, where the performances are usually of a high grade, and are so diversified and interspersed with popular novelties as never to pall upon the restless taste of the visitors, but always to present something piquant, fresh and exciting. Burton's is also a great resort for strangers, and a favorite among the critics.

Another establishment, very similar in character, is Brougham's Lyceum, although from its location, and the peculiar character of its company and performances, it includes in its visitors a somewhat more elevated order of the population. We often see in the dress circle and private boxes of this neat and handsome theatre, our most fashionable ladies; while the orchestra stalls are nightly occupied by the upper crust fast men, who pay a dollar a piece, and think it cheap, for the privilege of a nearer look at Mrs. Brougham's magnificent bust, Mary Taylor's handsome legs, and Miss Gould's saucy eyes.

Niblo's and the Broadway are filled with a more indiscriminate company. The great support of the former are the families of up town residents; and during the recent engagements of the Rousset girls we noticed that their well disciplined performances and the truly exquisite dancing of Caroline, drew constantly fashionable and brilliant audiences, equalling, in the character and the position of the members, the most favorite and aristocratic audiences at the Opera. The Broadway is the great resort for foreigners, critics and legitimate theatre goers, who cannot exist without at least a nightly looking in upon the performances at the leading theatre. Generally these performances are of a character to justify this devotion to them, although occasionally it happens that the nefarious staring system to which all our large theatres are unhappily subjected, bores the public with a series of performances expensive to the manager and unsatisfactory to the audience, while he might make money and delight his visitors by the well considered representations of his excellent stock.

But the grand point of attraction for our respectable middle class, is the inimitable and inevitable Christy's Minstrels. It is here that the mere desire for fun and enjoyment without the trouble of being critical or refined, which is the very striking characteristic of nine-tenths of all our population, finds full scope; and in the comicalities of these really thorough artists in their line, they find complete occupation for their love of amusement. We know of no place in the city where we would sooner go for an amusing and suggestive lesson in human nature than to Christy's Minstrels.

Then in winter we have our innumerable balls of every grade, character and style. The devotion of the New York public to dancing is proverbial, and extends through all classes, who pursue it with equal pleasure and pertinacity. From the gorgeous saloons in the Fifth Avenue to Mager's in Elizabeth street, every body dances. Probably there are not less than half a dozen public balls every night during the winter dancing season; and in summer, our innumerable steamboat excursions, flotilla balls and fourth of July and other stampedes, supply an almost equal round of saltatory festivities. These amusements, however, have been thoroughly described in detail, from first to last, in "New York by Gas-Light;" and, as it is one of the principal objects of authors now-a-days to make their last work contribute to the sale of its illustrious predecessors, I have to recommend to my readers who may wish to know more about the dancing business in New York, to peruse that graphic and popular work, the propriety and correctness of which are sufficiently established by the abuse it has received in the New York Tribune and other highly moral sheets.

The out-door amusements of our middle class is a subject worthy of our attention, and form one of our national characteristics. Foremost among them are the turn-outs of the firemen and the b'hoys in uniform—that is, if red shirts and muskets constitute that desirable state—to campment or target excursions, and otherwise. One of the big sights of New York, and one that must strongly impress an observant stranger, is a military fire company out on parade, or on its way to a target excursion at the Red House or some other favorite vicinity. The erect and stalwart men marching with a gait more solid and substantial than elegant or military, preceded by a loud screaming band of military music, and the rear brought up by the fattest and shiningest of negroes, holding the target upright in his arms, and grinning with the delight and notoriety of his position. Behind them come a motley and tumultuous stream of loafers and ragged urchins, with straws and feathers stuck in their hats, and clubs carried at their shoulders in imitation of their full grown prototypes. These amateur military parades are perfectly at home in Broadway, and pursue their winding way amid the omnibuses and drays in entire good nature and equanimity, carefully leaping the mud holes and ruts to save their pantaloons, if it is fair weather. But if it happens to be a rainy spell, and such happens are by no means rare in New York, then the broad bottomed trowsers are rolled up from the boots, and they go it straight through from the mark, mud and mud puddles being no obstacles. The character of the entertainment, the toasts, the sentiments, the good shots both with musket and tongue, the oorks and charges that are drawn, the casks and noses that are tapped,

the amiable knock-downs and drag-outs, the rough bear's play of these primitive muscular and good-natured children of a larger growth, would figure handsomely here, had we some faithful phonographer to bring us a due report; nor do we doubt that they would be quite as instructive as the gas and gammon, the blarney and twaddle, which, column after column, like slime in the wake of a tortoise, embellish the columns of our daily papers after some great man has made his passage through the city. Indeed, in these target excursions a degree of general good feeling and sincere enjoyment prevails which would put to shame the formal and conventional gatherings of so called statesmen, patriots and politicians.

Sunday, however, is the great day for the b'hoy. Then, whatever he may be subjected to during the week; whether he may have had money during the six days to buy rum and tobacco; whether his gal has given him the mitten, or whether he has had the "delicious triangles," or been expiating a spree in the Tombs—Sunday he must have his turn-out. In the warm spring and summer seasons it is to Hoboken, to Harlem, to Staten Island or Coney Island that he steers with his red cheeked and red ribbon gal, blooming like a garden of poppies, sunflowers and daffy-down-dillies, hanging lovingly upon his arm, and his own brilliant soaplocks fresh plastered and burnished for the occasion. At these times the b'hoy is truly an interesting animal, perfectly docile except when irritated; but you had better be careful not to tread upon his corns and not to encroach in any possible manner upon his comfort or his dignity. Incidents that he might during week days be disposed to pass over with a grunt and a growl, now that Lize is by his side would be instantaneously resented upon the spot. And this spirit of ambition and pride in the presence of the other sex, which characterizes all creation, from the knighterrant of the tournament doing his devoir in the presence of his lady love, to the poltroon barnyard chicken fighting for the favor of his sultana, sometimes leads to the most tragical consequences. Not unfrequently are these Sunday excursions embellished with "musses" of a serious character; and the green grass and golden flowers of Hoboken and Staten Island have often been dyed by the blood of rival chieftains among these half savage tribes of the Manhattanese.

"On the Avenue" is another favorite resort of "Mose" and "Sykesy." The b'hoy has a natural affection for the horse. He looks up to him, with an intuitive instinct, as the superior animal, and lavishes upon him an amount of affection and a degree of tenderness that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for any of his human relatives or associates to elicit from him. The horse, however, that Mose condescends to love

must be "one of 'em,"—must not be afraid to go, nor to let out all it knows at the shortest notice, and on the slightest provocation. A fast horse and a "high" gal are the two great earthly beatitudes of the New York b'hoy; and we verily believe that if he ever entertains any definite idea of God, he pictures him as something with a gallus bonnet, and that can go it inside of two minutes.

The great arena for the display of this species of public recreation, is the Third Avenue—a broad, straight, beautiful road, studded with grog shops on either side, and everything handy and convenient for taking the greatest possible advantage of rowdy Sundays, and keeping the suburbs and avenues of the city in such a condition that Christian men and women are disposed to keep shy of them. It is rather an exhilarating sight, however, it must be confessed, to watch the *extempore* trots and sporadic races that come off on the Avenue almost any afternoon, but especially on Sunday. Here, too, in his dainty little buggy, resorts the upper-class fast man and sportsman—sometimes with his mistress, but more frequently with his friends, and cutting what is technically known as the "tallest kind of a swell." A great deal of human nature and horse flesh is put to a very bad use daily on the Third Avenue; and of all the unprofitable ways of spending a Sunday that could be thought of, we believe that the b'hoy and the g'hal of New York have hit upon decidedly the most unprofitable.

The philosophical conclusions we are forced to draw from the contemplation of the amusements of the lower and middle classes of our population are by no means satisfactory nor encouraging. When we consider a mass of four hundred thousand individuals depending entirely for their means of recreation and mental refinement, for their knowledge and taste for the Beautiful, in all its infinite diversity of enchanting forms, upon such amusements as these, we cannot wonder at the coarseness and brutality of that public sentiment which is thus permitted to grow up utterly destitute of every opportunity for developing and exercising its higher qualities and capacities. Not a picture-gallery, not a concert-room, not so much as even a brass band of music upon the public squares; no free lectures and exhibitions upon science and the wonders of the natural world—no great public institutions where books and attractive entertainments are furnished gratuitously to the public—exist throughout all our colossal city. The community takes it for granted that it has done its duty when it lights the lamps, gathers up the mud in little heaps, and sets policemen to watch the doors of our store-houses and dwellings. It does not recognize the fact that the poor people, who cannot pay for refinement and luxury, have any minds, any souls, or any

morals or intellectual needs, which it may be its duty to supply. Were half the money that is now expended in policing the community and punishing vagrancy, vagabondism, and vice, devoted to the establishing of public galleries, public libraries and reading-rooms, public dramatic and musical entertainments, public lectures, and the more attractive branches of education generally, five years would not elapse before half of our criminal expenditure would be no longer needed—if, indeed, a moiety of the remaining portion did not become useless. Not dungeons, nor gibbets, not the cruel scourge of penitentiary labor and infamy, nor all the paraphernalia of punishment for crime that ever the ingenuity of mankind has conceived, possesses one tithe of the power to restrain the exaggerated impulses, to harmonize the perverted and discordant passions of the poor, as the influence—silent, yet ceaseless, piercing as sunshine in still waters—of the material Beautiful freely presented to the admiration of men. There is a power in physical beauty, and especially in the lofty creations and expressions of the fine arts, that goes with electric certainty to the centre and pivot of the soul of every human being, awaking and inflaming a loftier ambition and a purer aspiration, which looks with loathing and abhorrence upon all that is base, and selfish, and grovelling, and lifts the whole being into the light of a broader and more noble existence. It is society that is the criminal, when, while it employs all its power, and exhausts all its resources in defending and securing the rich and the educated, it withholds from its ignorant and erratic children all means of understanding their own natures, developing their spiritual wants, or appreciating their legitimate destinies. Even the monarchies and despotisms of the Old World have somewhat understood of this great and imperative lesson; and there is not a capital of Europe which is not embellished to a greater or less degree with its public galleries, libraries, and monuments, dedicated to the service of the whole community; while in this free and enlightened land, the home and arena of a new epoch, a new dispensation, not a solitary ray of the Beautiful beams for the eye and heart of the poor man. And yet our divines, our moralists, our teachers, exhaust themselves in wonder at the depravity and immoral tendencies of the age, and go nigh, in holy horror of the degraded classes, to despair of human nature itself. How long shall this double blindness curse the world?

We have now gone over the field of life occupied by the great middle and lower class of our population—indicating, describing, characterizing, and reflecting, as we went along, upon whatever appeared to us the most important and instructive themes. We ought to say in this place, for the sake of our own reputation for sanity, among many who, we hope,

will peruse these pages, that although fully, earnestly, and devoutly believing in the truth of every opinion, every idea, and every movement we have advocated for the melioration of the working class and the purification of society, yet we do not at all believe in their practicability, save by most gradual and imperceptible steps. Those steps are continually being taken, within and all around us; and the actual progress that carries society on its way to a higher and better state of existence is by no means carried on through the direct influence of those who are avowedly reformers, or whose views are most frequently and most loudly expressed.

CHAPTER XVI.

LEWD WOMEN.

AFTER having brought my last chapter to a close, I have been several days hesitating, reviewing my thoughts, opinions and observations, and experiencing a sort of dread in commencing the final chapter of this book, which must be devoted to that momentous yet revolting subject, Prostitution—its extent, its conditions, and its remedy. Those who have gone thus far with me in my investigations into the actual condition of society in this metropolis, will not need that I should repeat here my religious and unalterable conviction that a vast majority of female prostitution is the direct result of the inadequate compensation for female labor; and in restating this broad fact, I cannot neglect the opportunity of marking an almost incredible truth—that society should have deliberately, and for thousands of years, committed its greatest outrage and its worst oppression, upon its weakest, most endeared, most beautiful and most indispensable members. Without the physical and personal existence of woman, society would cease; and without her moral and sentimental influence it would retrograde to barbarism and brutality. It would be natural to suppose, therefore, that beings formed by the Creator to play so conspicuous and important a part in the economy of society, should be cherished by that society as its dearest treasures and most priceless blessings. Such, however, is by no means the case, neither in a general view nor in individual instances. As a class, women are deceived, outraged, robbed and trampled upon; while the more favored individuals of their sex at best become the objects of the whims and the

caprices of man's inconstant affection, alternately exaggerated to a divinity, or brutalized to a slave. Men have made women in turn the object of their imaginations and their passions, never of their esteem and sympathy. Seeing herself thus abandoned, thus misunderstood, and thus systematically crushed under the contempt of the superior sex, it is not unnatural that woman should have discovered the secret of her power, and by exciting and flattering the appetite and vanity of her cruel master, should have sought to snatch from his yielding moments some portion of that power, and of those rights, of which it is the whole object and tendency of society and of law to deprive her. This state of existence has made woman herself a perverted and vicious being, has poisoned the purest fountains of her devotion, her constancy and her self-sacrificing affection, and has made her the heartless, sometimes helpless, and sometimes all-powerful, victim and enemy of man.

The first duty of a true society would be to secure woman from every possibility of unnecessary suffering, from all wrong, from all injustice, and from all likeness of oppression. But this first duty of society has been wholly and persistently neglected and set at naught. The consequence is that the unnatural and inverted relations existing between the two sexes, instead of producing that mutual and beneficent influence upon both, which is so clearly indicated by their organizations, and by the natural tendency of their instincts, have exacerbated the bad qualities of man, and nourished into a pernicious growth the weaknesses and the defects of woman; and instead of forming together and in a harmonious relation with each other, a symmetrical and beautiful society, they have, by being rudely torn asunder and re-presented to each other in a false aspect, made the world a social hell.

We have said that the principal and direct cause of the extent of prostitution, was the inadequate reward allowed to women for their manual labor, and their services in behalf of others. The disproportion between the wages of the two classes of laborers, male and female, is more enormous than would at first sight be believed. The worst rewarded male laborer in our city does not receive, while engaged in work, less than a dollar a day. The best rewarded female labor, in the most skillful and expert of those occupations which employ a vast majority of working women, does not receive one-half that amount; and on an average the comparative wages received by men and women for the performance of mechanical labor, is at least as four to one in favor of the male.

Twenty thousand women in the city of New York devote their days, and a portion of their nights, faithfully to the performance of the severest

and most health-exhausting toil, at rates of compensation which, on the whole, after deducting days for sickness, and days when there is no work, and other drawbacks indispensable to their existence, do not exceed one hundred dollars a year for each. Out of this must be paid their board, their washing—for remember, they have no time to wash, and scarcely to repair their own clothes—their education, their amusements, their physician's bills, their clothes, in short every personal expense to which they are liable. An extensive observation of the habits and conditions of the laborers of New York, extending over a series of years, would warrant us in the belief that we have placed this average considerably too high, and that, year by year, and estimating the weeks in which no work is to be procured, seventy-five dollars a year would be nearer the average; still, we place it at a hundred, or about two dollars a week. Now then let us consider—at the lowest possible estimate of board, clothing, washing, and the other indispensables of the meanest grade of life, we are assailed by the positive conviction that, upon the sum we have named, these women could not exist. The startling question, then, forces itself upon us—from what resource do they draw the additional sums necessary to prolong their bare lives from year to year? Read Mr. Mayhew's "London Labor and the London Poor;" read my essays, published six or seven years ago in the "Tribune," under the title of "Labor in New York, its Conditions and Rewards;" and the answer to this question is before us. It is from prostitution whence the additional income of these poor wretches is drawn. A vast majority of them only resort to this in the last extremity, and when their absolute wants of food, and clothing, and habitation, are miserably fulfilled, they retire with horror and self loathing to their original condition of life, faithfully resisting every allurements of the tempting world without, until again driven forth into the streets by the pangs of hunger. This is the life led by many thousands in this city of New York, of those tender and beautiful beings who were given to the world by God to bless and sanctify, and ennoble its inhabitants, to preserve in their faithful bosoms the germs of that celestial love that has passed out of man's more radiative nature, and concentrated itself alone in the female heart. Many of these poor creatures, as they see from out their wretched garret-windows, or through the chinks and crannies of their stifled and noisy workshops, the gilded and mirthful daughters of shame flaunt by in splendid robes and laughing humor, turn the despair that feeds upon their hearts into a cold and calculating resolution to escape the doom to which they have been consigned, and to prey upon their oppressors for their own pleasure and short-lived joy. Usually they are seduced and betrayed to the first com-

mission of crime through the promptings of a pure and confiding love, a love born in their hearts for some man whom they invest with all the angelic attributes that their souls love to worship, and who, when his base appetite is gratified, invariably deserts his victim with the heartlessness of nothing but a man. Then revenge, hatred and despair, take possession of the poor creature's soul. Then for a moment the light of her immortal nature is extinguished, and in one mad spasm of frenzy and insanity, she takes the fatal plunge into open vice, that never can be retrieved. Once thoroughly perverted in the very source of her natural and her moral emotions, woman becomes a demon in her turn, and preys remorselessly upon her insensate victims. The very absence of appetite itself, which is a pervading characteristic of a vast majority of women, enables them to play effectually upon the passions of men. After the first paroxysm of their rage and hatred subsides, they look their new destiny in the face with horror, and in the agonies of remorse, fly to intemperance as the Lethean stream that will save them from its dread visitations. Thus prepared by every outrage, every excess, and every stimulant that can develop the worst passions of which the human soul is capable, these smiling ogres are let loose to prey remorselessly upon the society that has made them what they are. This, in a few brief phrases, is the picture of prostitution as it exists at the present day in every civilized community. There are minor features and minor causes which require a somewhat detailed and delicate discrimination in their handling.

There are some questions so painful and perplexing that statesmen, moralists and philanthropists shrink from them by common consent; and of all these questions prostitution is the darkest, the knottiest, and saddest. From whatever point of view it is regarded, it presents considerations so difficult and so grievous that neither ruler nor writer has yet been found with nerve to face the sadnesses, or resolution to encounter the difficulties. Statesmen see the mighty evil lying on the main pathway up the world, and, with a groan of pity and despair, "pass by on the other side." Like the timid patient who, fearing and feeling the existence of a terrible disease, they dare not examine its symptoms nor probe its depth, lest they should discover that it was incurable and mortal; or, like a more foolish animal still, they hide their heads at the mention of the danger, as if they hoped by ignoring to annihilate it. It is from a strong conviction that this is not worthy behaviour on the part of those who aspire to guide either the actions or the opinions of others, that we have undertaken to speak of so dismal and delicate a matter. We are aware that mischief is risked by bringing the subject promi-

nently before the public eye, and that the benefit to be derived from the discussion should be so clear and certain as unquestionably to overbalance this risk. We are aware that it is a matter on which it is not easy to speak hopefully, not always possible to speak with confidence as to facts, cause or consequences. We are aware that we expose ourselves to much scoffing from the vulgar and lightminded, much dishonest misrepresentation from those who echo any popular cry, much unmerited anger from those who deem that refinement forbids them to speak of things which it does not forbid them to do; much serious blame on the part of those who think that no object can justify us in compelling attention to so revolting a moral sore. We have weighed all these obstacles, and we have concluded that the end we have in view, and the chance good we may effect, and the suffering we may mitigate, warrant us in disregarding them. We think that such considerations have already too long withheld serious and benevolent men from facing one of the sorest evils the sun now shines upon, or the darkness of night covers. Our divines, our philanthropists, our missionaries, nay, even our Sisters of Charity, do not shrink from entering in person the most loathsome abodes of sin and misery—nor from penetrating into the lowest dens of filth and pollution, where human despair ever dragged itself to die—when led thither by the impulse of compassion and the hope of good. Why then should we allow indolence, disgust, or the fear of misconstruction to deter us from entering upon an inquiry as to the possibility of mitigating the very worst form which human wretchedness and degradation can assume. The best and purest of our race do not feel themselves repelled from, or tarnished by the darkest haunts of actual guilt and horror, where pain is to be assuaged, or where souls are to be saved. Let us act by *subjects* as they act by *scenes*.

Feeling, then, that it is a false and mischievous delicacy, and a culpable moral cowardice, which shrinks from the consideration of the great social vice of prostitution—because the subject is a loathsome one: feeling, also, that no good can be hoped unless we are at liberty to treat the subject, and all its collaterals, with perfect freedom, both of thought and speech—convinced that the evil must be probed with a courageous and unshrinking hand before a cure can be suggested, or palliatives can safely be applied—we have deliberately resolved to call the public attention to it, though we do so with pain, reluctance, and diffidence.

And first—to preclude misrepresentation as far as this is possible—we must show our colors by expressing our own feelings as to fornication. Our morality will be considered by the divine as strangely lax and inconsistent, and by the man of the world, the ordinary thinker, and the mass

who follow current ideas, without thinking at all—as savage and absurd ; nevertheless, we conceive it to harmonize with the ethics of nature and the dictates of unsophisticated sense. We look on fornication, then (by which we always mean promiscuous intercourse with women who prostitute themselves for pay), as the worst and lowest form of sexual irregularity, the most revolting to the unpolluted feelings, the most indicative of a low nature, the most degrading and sapping to the loftier life—

“ The sin of all most sure to blight—
The sin of all that the soul's light
Is soonest lost, extinguished in.”

Sexual indulgence, however guilty in its circumstances, however tragical in its results, is, when accompanied by love, a sin *according to nature* ; fornication is a sin *against nature* ; its peculiarity and heinousness consist in its divorcing from all feeling of love that which was meant by nature as the last and intensest expression of passionate love ; in its putting asunder that which God has joined ; in its reducing the deepest gratification of unreserved affection to a mere momentary and brutal indulgence ; in its making that only one of our appetites, which is redeemed from mere *criminality* by the hallowing influence of the better and tenderer feelings with which nature has connected it, as animal as all the rest. It is a voluntary exchange of the passionate love of a spiritual and intellectual being, for the mere hunger and thirst of the beast. It is a profanation of that which the higher organization of man enables him to elevate and refine—it is the introduction of filth into the pure sanctuary of the affections.

We have said that fornication reduces the most fervent expression of deep and devoted human love to a mere animal gratification. But it does more than this : it not only brings man down to a level with the brutes, but it has one feature which places him far, far below them. Sexual connection with them, is the simple indulgence of a natural desire *mutually* felt ; in the case of human prostitution, it is in many, probably in most instances, a brutal desire on one side only, and a reluctant and loathing submission, purchased by money, on the other. Among cattle, the sexes meet by common instinct and a common wish—it is reserved for the human animal to treat the female as a mere victim for his lust, The peculiar guilt of prostitution, then, consists, in our view of the matter, in its being *unnatural* ; a violation of our true instincts—not a mere frailty in yielding to them. On this matter, therefore, we feel at least as strongly as any divine can do.

In the second place, we feel called upon to protest against the manner

in which prostitutes are universally regarded, spoken of, and treated in this country, as dishonoring alike to our religion and our manhood. The iniquity pervades all classes, and both sexes. No language is too savage for these wretched *women*. They are outcasts, Pariahs, lepers. Their touch even in the extremity of suffering, is shaken off, as if it were pollution and disease. It is discreditable to a woman, even to be supposed to know of their existence. They are kicked, cuffed, trampled on with impunity by every one. Their oaths are seldom regarded in a court of justice, scarcely ever in a police court. They seem to be considered far more out of the pale of humanity than the negroes on a slave plantation, or fellahs in a pasha's dungeon.

If the extremity of human wretchedness—if a condition which combines within itself every element of suffering, mental and physical, circumstantial and intrinsic—is a passport to our compassion, every heart should bleed for the position of the prostitute, as it never bled at any form of woe before. We wish it were in our power to give a picture, simple, faithful, uncolored, but “too severely true,” of horrors which constitute the daily life of women of the town. The world—the unknowing world—is apt to fancy her revelling in the *enjoyment* of licentious pleasure; lost and dead to all sense of remorse and shame; wallowing in mire because she loves it. Alas! there is no truth in this conception, or only in the most exceptional cases. Passing over all the agonies of grief and terror she must have endured before she reached her present degradation; the vain struggle to retrieve the first false, fatal step; the feeling of her inevitable future pressing her down with all the hopeless weight of destiny; the dreams of a happy past that haunt her in the night-watches, and keep her even trembling on the verge of madness;—passing over all this, what is her position when she has reached the last step of her downward progress, and has become a common prostitute? Every calamity that can afflict human nature, seems to have gathered round her—cold, hunger, disease, often absolute starvation. Insufficiently fed, insufficiently clad, she is driven out alike by necessity, and by the dread of solitude, to wander through the streets by night, for the chance of earning a meal by the most loathsome labor that imagination can picture, or a penal justice could inflict. For, be it remembered, desire has, by this time, long ceased; the mere momentary excitement of sexual indulgence is no longer attainable; repetition has changed pleasure into absolute repugnance; and those miserable women ply their wretched trade with a loathing and abhorrence, which only perpetual semi-intoxication can deaden or endure. The curses, the blows, the nameless brutalities they have to submit to from their ruffianly associates of the

brothel and saloon, are as nothing to the hideous punishment inherent in the daily practice of their sin. Their evidence, and the evidence of all who have come in contact with them, is unanimous on this point—that rum alone enables them to live and act; that without its constant stimulus and stupefaction, they would have long since died from mere physical exhaustion, or gone mad from mental horrors. The reaction from the nightly excitement is too terrible to be borne, and rum is again resorted to as a morning draught. Even this wretched stimulus often fails; and there can be few of our readers who have not seen some of these unhappy creatures, after a winter's night spent in walking to and fro for hours, amid snow, frost, or piercing winds, in dress too flimsy even for the hottest season, sink down on a door step fainting and worn out, too feeble to be able, and too miserable to desire to rise. All this time too, disease of many kinds is busy with its victim; and positive pain is added to severe privation and distracting thought. Do not let it be supposed that they are insensible to the horrors of their situation; we believe this is rarely the case altogether; where it is so, they owe it to the spirits in which they invariably indulge.

The career of these women is a brief one; their downward path a marked and inevitable one; and they know this well. They are almost never rescued; escape themselves they cannot. *Vestigia nulla retrorsum*. The swindler may repent, the drunkard may reform; society aids and encourages them in their thorny path of repentance and atonement, and welcomes back with joy and generous forgetfulness the lost sheep and prodigal son. But the prostitute may not pause—*may NOT recover*: at the very first halting timid step she may take to the right or to the left, with a view to flight from her appalling doom, the whole resistless influence of the surrounding world, the good as well as the bad, close around her to hunt her back into perdition.

Then comes the last sad scene of all, when drink, disease, and starvation have laid her on her death-bed. On a wretched pallet in a filthy garret, with no companions but the ruffians, drunkards, and harlots with whom she had cast her lot; amid brutal curses, ribald language, and drunken laughter; with a past, which, even were there no future, would be dreadful to contemplate, laying its weight of despair upon her soul; with a prospective beyond the grave which the little she retains of her early religion lights up for her with the lurid light of hell—this poor daughter of humanity terminates a life, of which, if the sin has been grievous, the expiation has been fearfully tremendous.

We have seen that, even in their lowest degradation, these poor creatures never wholly lose the sense of shame or sensitiveness to the

opinions of the world. It is pleasing also to find that another of the chief virtues which belong to the female character, seems never to become extinct within them, or even to be materially impaired. Their kindness to all who are in suffering or distress, has attracted the attention and called forth the admiration of all who have been thrown much into contact with them. "The English Opium Eater" bears eloquent testimony to the unquenchable tenderness of their nature, and the ready generosity with which they lavish aid to the needy out of their scanty and precarious means. Duchatelet states that their affection for children, whether their own or not, is carried to a point surpassing that common to women, and that, in consequence, they make the most careful and valuable of nurses.

But if sympathy be due to these unhappy women on the mere ground of the suffering they undergo, it will perhaps be even more readily rendered when we examine a little into the antecedents which have led them to their fate. There is, we think, a very general misapprehension, especially among the fair sex, as to the original causes which reduce this unfortunate class of girls to their state of degradation—the primary circumstances of their fall from chastity. On this matter, those who know the most will assuredly judge the most leniently. Those who think of this class of sinners as severely as closest moralists, and voluptuaries with filthy fancies and soiled souls, and—alas! as most women are apt to do—fancy the original occasion of their lapse from virtue to have been either lust, immodest and unruly desires, silly vanity, or the deliberate exchange of innocence for luxury and show. We believe they are quite mistaken, it is the first *never*, or so rarely, that in treating of the subject we may be entitled to ignore the exceptions; it is the latter only in a small portion of the cases that occur. It is very important to a true view and a sound feeling on these matters, to set this error right. Women's *desires* scarcely ever lead to their fall; for (save in a class of whom we shall speak presently) the desire scarcely ever exists in a definite and conscious form, till they *have* fallen. In this point there is a radical and essential difference between the sexes: the arrangements of nature and the customs of society would be even more unequal than they are, was it not so. In men in general, the sexual desire is inherent and spontaneous, and belongs to the condition of puberty. In the other sex, the desire is dormant, if not non-existent, till excited; always till excited by undue familiarities, almost always till excited by actual intercourse. Those feelings which coarse and licentious minds are so ready to attribute to girls, are almost invariably *consequences*. Women, whose position and education have protected them from exciting causes, con-

stantly pass through life without ever being cognizant of the promptings of the senses. Happy for them that it is so! we do not mean to say that uneasiness may not be felt—that health may not sometimes suffer; but there is no consciousness of the cause. Among all the middle and higher classes, and to a greater extent than would be commonly believed, among the lower classes also, where they either come of virtuous parents or have been carefully brought up, this may be affirmed as a general fact. Were it not for this kind decision of nature, which has been assisted by that correctness of feeling which pervades our education, the consequences would we believe, be frightful. If the passions of women were ready, strong and spontaneous, in a degree even remotely approaching the form they assume in the coarser sex, there can be little doubt that sexual irregularities would reach a height, of which, at present, we have happily no conception. Imagine for a moment, the sufferings and struggles the virtuous among them would, on that supposition, have to undergo, in a country where, to hundreds of thousands, marriage is impossible, and to hundreds of thousands more, is postponed till the period of youth is passed; and where modesty, decency and honor, alike preclude them from that indulgence which men practice without restraint or shame. No! Nature has laid many heavy burdens on the delicate shoulders of the weaker sex: let us rejoice that this at least is spared them.

The causes which lead to the fall of women are various; but all of them are of a nature to move grief and compassion, rather than indignation and contempt, in all minds cognizant of the strange composition of humanity—the follies of the wise, the weakness of the strong, the lapses of the good; cognizant, also, of those surprising and deplorable inconsistencies, by which faults may sometimes be found to have grown out of virtues, and very many of our heaviest offences to have been grafted by human imperfection upon the best and kindest of our affections.

The first and perhaps the largest class of prostitutes are those who may fairly be said to have no choice in the matter—who were born and bred in sin; whose parents were thieves and prostitutes before them; whose dwelling has always been in an atmosphere of squalid misery and sordid guilt; who have never had a glimpse or a hearing of a better life; whom fate has marked from their cradle for a course of degradation; for whom there is no *fall*, for they stood already on the lowest level of existence; in whom there is no crime, for they had and could have neither an aspiration, a struggle, nor a choice. Such abound in London, New York and other large cities; and, though to a less extent, in almost all large towns. Their families form the *classes dangereuses* of French

statisticians ; and it is from these that is recruited the population of the jails, the lowest brothels, the penitentiaries and the alms-house. How this class is to be checked, controlled, diminished, and finally extirpated, presents one of the most difficult practical problems for statesmen, and one, to the solution of which they must address themselves without delay ; but it is one with which at present we have not to do. All that we wish to urge is, that the prostitutes who spring from this class are clearly the victims of circumstances, and therefore must, on all hands, be allowed to be objects of the most unalloyed compassion.

Others unquestionably, and alas ! too many, fall, from the snares of vanity. They are flattered by the attentions of those above them in station, and gratified by a language more refined and courteous than they hear from those of their own sphere. They enjoy the present pleasure, think they can secure themselves against being led on too far, and, like foolish moths, flutter around the flame which is to dazzle and consume them. For these we have no justification and little apology to offer. Silly parents, and a defective or injudicious education form their most frequent excuse. Still, even these are not worthy of the treatment they meet with, even from those of their own sex, who cannot be unconscious of the same foibles—still less from men. Let those who are without sin among us cast the first stone at them.

Some, too, there are, for whom no plea can be offered—who voluntarily and deliberately sell themselves to shame, and barter, in a cold spirit of bargain, chastity and reputation, for carriages, jewels, and a luxurious table. All that can here be urged is the simple fact—too notorious to be denied, too disgraceful for the announcement of it to be listened to with patience—that, in this respect, the unfortunate women who ultimately come upon the town, are far from being the chief or most numerous delinquents. For one woman who thus, of deliberate choice, sells herself to a lover, ten sell themselves to a husband. Let not the world cry shame upon us for the juxtaposition. The barter is as naked and as bold in the one case, as in the other ; the thing bartered is the same ; the difference between the two transactions, lies in the price that is paid down.

Many—and these are commonly the most innocent, and the most wronged of all—are deceived by unreal marriages ; and in these cases, their culpability consists in the folly which confided in their lover, to the extent of concealing their intention from their friends—in all cases a weak, and in most cases a blameable concealment ; but surely not one worthy of the fearful punishment which in nearly every instance overtakes it. Many—far more than would generally be believed—fall from

pure unknowingness. Their affections are engaged, their confidence secured; thinking no evil themselves, they permit caresses, which in themselves, and to them, indicate no wrong, and are led on ignorantly and thoughtlessly from one familiarity to another, not conscious where those familiarities must inevitably end, till ultimate resistance becomes almost impossible, and they learn, when it is too late—what women can never learn too early, or impress too strongly on their minds—that a lover's encroachments, to be repelled successfully, must be repelled and negatived at the very outset.

We believe we shall be borne out by the observation of all who have inquired much into the antecedents of this unfortunate class of women—those at least, who have not sprung from the *very* low, or actually vicious sections of the community—in stating that a vast proportion of those who, after passing through the career of kept mistresses, ultimately come upon the town, fall in the first instance, from a mere exaggeration and perversion of one of the best qualities of a woman's heart. They yield to desires in which they do not share, from a weak generosity which cannot refuse anything to the passionate entreaties of the man they love. There is in the warm, fond, heart of woman, a strange and sublime unselfishness, which men too commonly discover only to profit by—a positive love of self-sacrifice—an active, so to speak, an aggressive desire to show their affection, by giving up to those who have won it, something they hold very dear. It is an unreasoning and dangerous yearning of the spirit, precisely analogous to that which prompts the surrenders and self-tortures of the religious devotee. Both seek to prove their devotion to the idol they have enshrined, by casting down before his altar their richest and most cherished treasures. This is no romantic, or overcolored picture; those who deem it so, have not known the better portion of the sex, or do not deserve to have known them. We refer confidently to all whose memory unhappily may furnish an answer to the question, whether an appeal to this perverted generosity is not almost always the final resistless argument to which female virtue succumbs. When we consider these things, and remember also, as we must now proceed to show, how many thousands trace their ruin to actual want—the want of those dependent on them—we believe, upon our honor, that nine out of ten originally modest women, who fall from virtue, fall from motives or feelings in which sensuality and self have no share; nay, under circumstances in which selfishness, had they not been of too generous a nature to listen to its dictates, would have saved them.

We have already spoken of that hard necessity—that grinding poverty approaching to actual want—which, by unanimous testimony, is declared

to be the most prolific source of prostitution in this and in all other countries. In Paris, the elaborate researches of Duchatelet have established this point in the clearest manner. After speaking of the prostitutes supplied from those families who live in vice and hopeless abandonment, he proceeds thus:—

“Of all causes of prostitution in Paris, and probably in all great towns, there are none more influential than the want of work, and indigence resulting from insufficient earnings. What are the earnings of our laundresses, our sempstresses, our milliners? Compare the wages of the most skillful with those of the more ordinary and moderately able, and we shall see if it be possible for these latter to procure even the strict necessities of life; and if we further compare the price of their work with that of their dishonor, we shall cease to be surprised that so great a number should fall into irregularities, thus made almost inevitable. This state of things has naturally a tendency to increase, in the actual state of our society, in consequence of the usurpation by men of a large class of occupations, which it would be fitter and more honorable in our sex to resign to the other. Is it not shameful, for example, to see in Paris thousands of men in the prime of their age, in *cafés*, shops and warehouses, leading the sedentary and effeminate life which is only suitable for women.”

M. Duchatelet adds some other facts which fully confirm the testimony we shall have to bring respecting an unfortunate class in our country, viz. that filial and maternal affection drive many to at least occasional prostitution, as a means, and the only means left to them, of earning bread for those dependent on them for support.

“It is difficult to believe that the trade of prostitution should have been embraced by certain women as a means of fulfilling their maternal or filial duties—nothing, however, is more true. It is by no means rare to see married women, widowed, or deserted by their husbands, and in consequence deprived of all support, become prostitutes with the sole object of saving their family from dying of hunger. It is still more common to find young girls, unable to procure from their honest occupations an adequate provision for their aged and infirm parents, reduced to prostitute themselves in order to eke out their livelihood. I have found too many particulars regarding these two classes, not to be convinced that they are much more numerous than is generally imagined.”

M. Duchatelet sums up the results of investigations into the cases of 5,183 Parisian prostitutes as follows:—

Driven to the profession by parental abandonment, excessive want, and actual destitution	2,696
To earn food for the support of their parents or children	89
Driven by shame to fly from their homes	280
Abandoned by their seducers, and having nothing to turn to	2,118
Total	5,183

We shall not take much pains in proving that poverty is the chief determining cause which drives women into prostitution in England and America, as in France; partly because we have no adequate statistics, and we are not disposed to present our readers with mere fallacious estimates, but mainly because no one doubts the proposition. Granting all that is or can be said of the idleness, extravagance, and love of dress, of these poor women, the number of those who would adopt such a life, were any other means of obtaining an adequate maintenance open to them, will be allowed on all hands to be small indeed.

Now, we surely cannot be wrong, in assuming that we have said enough to induce those who have hitherto thought of prostitutes only with disgust and contempt, to exchange these sentiments for the more just and more Christian feelings of grief, compassion, and desire to soothe and to save. The sin that arises from generous, though weak self abandonment; the sin that is induced by the intolerable anguish of a child's starvation, must be regarded, both in Heaven and on earth, with a very different degree and kind of condemnation from that which is called forth by frailty arising out of the cravings of vanity, or the unbridled indulgence of animal desire. Enough has surely been said, to induce us to regard these unfortunate creatures rather as erring and suffering fellow creatures, than as the outcasts and Pariahs they are now considered. But one more most weighty consideration remains before we quit this part of our subject.

We have seen that the great majority of these poor women fall, in the first instance, from causes in which vice and selfishness have no share. For that almost irresistible series of sequences, by which one lapse from chastity conducts ultimately to prostitution, *we*—the world—must bear the largest share of the blame. What makes it impossible for them to retrace their steps?—almost impossible even to pause in their career of ruin. Clearly, that harsh, savage, unjust, unchristian public opinion which has resolved to regard a whole life of indulgence on the part of one sex as venial and natural, and a single false step, on the part of the other, as irretrievable and unpardonable. How few women are there who, after the first error, do not awake to repentance, agony, and shame, and

would not give all they possess to be allowed to recover and recoil? They may be in love with their seducers—never with their sin. On the contrary, they hate it the more earnestly from having felt the weight of its chains, and tasted the bitterness of its degradation. They yearn with a passionate earnestness, of which mere innocence can form no conception, to be permitted to recover their lost position at the expense of any penitence, however severe, after the lapse of any time, however long. But we brutally refuse to lend an ear to their entreaties. Forgetting our Master's precepts—forgetting our human frailty—forgetting our own heavy portion in the common guilt—we turn contemptuously aside from the kneeling and weeping Magdalen, coldly bid her to despair, and leave her *alone with the irreparable*. Instead of helping her up, we thrust her down, when endeavoring to rise; we choose to regard her not as frail, but as depraved. Every door is shut upon her, every avenue of escape is closed. A sort of fate environs her. The more shame she feels—i. e. the less her *virtue* has suffered in reality—the more impossible is her recovery, because the more does she shrink from those who might have been able to redeem her. She is driven into prostitution by the weight of all society pressing upon her.

If she is in the lower ranks of life, what resource but prostitution is open to her? If she be a semstress, what lady will take her into her house to work. If she be a maidservant, what mistress will either accept or retain her? If she belong to the classes immediately above those in the social scale, is the refuge of the family hearth freely opened to the repentant sinner, if her shame allows her to approach it? Has she most reason to expect that she will be spurned away from it in anger, or welcomed home with the tears of joy that are shed over the lost sheep? Alas! is it not notorious, that of a hundred fathers who would fall upon the neck of a prodigal son, and hail his return with unlimited forgiveness, there is scarcely one who, obedient to the savage morality of the world, would not turn his back upon the erring, repentant daughter? When shall we learn in judging the moral delinquencies of the two sexes, to eschew those partial balances and false weights, which are an abomination to the Lord?

One only chance of restoration does society offer to the poor victim of seduction; and even this chance does not lie within her option. If her seducer can be induced, by bribe, persuasion or threat, to marry her, her fault is not expiated, but amended and obliterated; as the phrase goes, she is "made an honest woman again." What a withering sarcasm upon our ethical notions is contained in that coarse expression! If the poor

girl can induce or compel the man who has betrayed her, to swear a lie of fidelity to her, at the altar; if she can bind to her by legal process, a libertine who, being bound against his will, is certain to hate and abuse her; if, having committed the pitiable folly of yielding to an unworthy deceiver, she is willing still to commit the more monstrous folly of putting her whole future fate into his hands, after his unworthiness has been made manifest—then, on that hard condition, and that only, can her character be whitewashed. The pardon of society is granted or withheld, according as she can or cannot, obtain a legal hold on her betrayer. For ourselves, we confess that in the cases which have come before us, we have seldom felt disposed to counsel such views, or such suggestions. We have said, “Do not let one false step lead you on to commit another, of which the punishment may last through life: we will do all in our power to hide your shame, and enable you to recover your position, and atone for your sin; but do not, for the sake of avoiding what you have brought upon yourself, make yourself the slave of a man who has injured you, and now wishes to desert you. Do not take a step of irremediable mischief, for the sake of escaping the world’s reproaches; for the deed itself, and its appearance to your own conscience, can be changed by no subsequent proceedings!” We must, however, add, that we have rarely found the victim of seduction willing to listen to our reasoning. Their desire of recovering a social position, and their horror of the probable alternative, were generally strong enough to induce them to welcome all the terrors of an unhappy marriage.

Yet this is the sole condition on which society will pardon the erring; the only way it offers them of retrieving that which, were better and kindlier notions to prevail, might generally be retrievable. At its door lie the consequences of this harsh decision.

For the *first* fatal but pardonable error of woman, vanity, weakness, unregulated affection, the pressure of want, the perversion of generosity, or the cruel deception of others, must bear the blame; for the subsequent and far guiltier steps, by which frailty gradually darkens into coarse and grievous sin, the hard-hearted, inequitable pharisaism of society must be held responsible. In this matter, “we are very guilty concerning our sister;” and women are even guiltier than men. Let us, for a moment, look at this monstrous barbarity from a natural, rather than a conventional view; and let those who are shocked at the uncompromising plainness of our speech, look back on their own experience, and question, if they can, the experience of others, as to the truth of our remarks, before they venture to condemn us. We have no wish to extenuate the sin, or to palliate the weakness; but above all, and before, let us be *just*.

What is, among the originally correct-minded and well-conducted, the real difference between the first sacrifice at the first shrine of love in the case of a married and an unmarried woman? It is not that one feels that she is acting virtuously, and the other, that she is acting viciously—*the sense of shame is the same in both cases*: we appeal to all modestly brought up women if it be not so. Indeed, can it be otherwise?

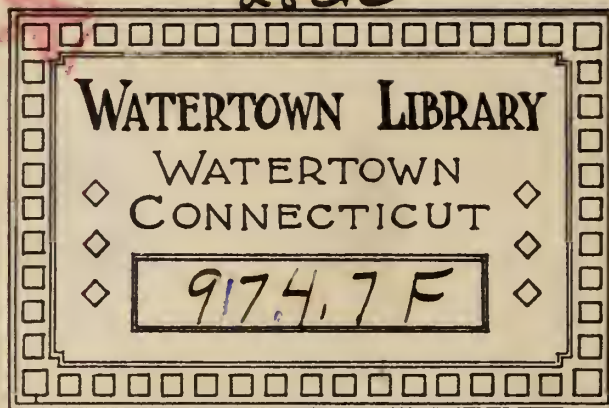
As a most virtuous and sensible lady once said:—"It is not a quarter-of-an-hour's ceremony in a church that can make *that* welcome or tolerable to pure and delicate feelings, which would otherwise outrage their whole previous notions, and their whole natural and moral sense." Among the decorously educated (and it is of such only that we are speaking), the first sacrifice is made and enacted, *in both cases*, in a delirium of mingled love and shame. The married woman feels shame, often even remorse, and a strong confusion of all her previous moral conceptions; but the world laughs at her scruples—tells her that her feelings are all nonsense, and exalts her to the honors of a matron. The unmarried woman experiences the same confusion, remorse, and shame; and the world reëchoes her feelings—confirms the sentence she has passed upon herself, and casts her out upon a dunghill. The practical difference between them being, that the church ceremony—which could not change the nature of the action *common to both, and accompanied and prompted by the same feelings in both*—secures to the one a permanent protection, and the sanction of the world and the world's laws; while the other, imprudent, deceived, or self-sacrificing creature, is left destitute of either: and the world steps in and says to her, "You shall not return to peace, or virtue, or domestic life—the paradise of comfort and hope is closed to you for ever upon earth." Let us trust that Heaven is more merciful and just. The married woman says to her, "we have both submitted with reluctance and distress to the embraces of a man we loved; but the consequences to me are a happy home and loving children, who are a glory and a crown of honor to my hearthstone; to you the consequences are desertion, horror, and degradation, and your children shall be a terror and a curse to you. The very same deed—varied only in its antecedents—which leaves *me* free to kneel the next morning at the throne of grace, with an unstained conscience and an assured hope—makes *you* feel that heaven has cast you off, and that the altar, to which you cling in your agony, is polluted by your touch; and all this because *I* had secured a protection and a legal sanction before I yielded, and you had *not*." Let us not be misunderstood. We are far from meaning to affirm that the circumstance of obtaining a legal and

religious license beforehand, does not constitute a wide and vital distinction between the cases; but where it is, as it often is, the only distinction, it cannot of itself suffice to constitute the one a loathsome wretch, while the other is a pure and honored matron. The instinctive feeling of mankind assures us that there must be something sadly wrong and out of joint in the premises that lead to such a decision. Justice and mercy forbid us to confirm the harsh decree.

Moreover, the mercy, the gentleness, the kind consideration towards human infirmity, the tender treatment of guilt, which we deny to the victim, we lavish on the betrayer. *Hers* is innate depravity, hopeless degradation, unworthiness which must be pushed out of sight, blotted from memory, ignored in good society and polite speech; *his* are the venial errors of youth, the ordinary tribute to natural desires, the common laxity of a man of the world. Truly, it is time we should come to a sounder estimation and a juster judgment-seat; we owe a fairer reckoning both to those whom we condemn, and to those whom we absolve.

THE END.

Lock



SP 348



